

Back to the Basics of Recovery

“It works—it really does.”

Handouts for the Four Sessions

Stapled Packet: Eighteen Handouts From One-Sided to Two-Sided (Nine Pages Total)

- 1 Summary of Handouts for the Four Sessions
- 2 Suggested Guidelines for the Sharing Partner
- 3-4 Suggested “Big Book” Passages for Taking the Twelve Steps
- 5-6 Four Spiritual Activities Illustrated with the Square and Triangle
- 7-8 Taking Steps Four through Nine using an Assets and Liabilities Checklist
- 9 Fourth Step Inventory (Blank)
- 10 Fourth Step Questions
- 11 Fourth Step Inventory (After Answering Questions)
- 12 Explanation of Terms—Assets and Liabilities Checklist
- 13 Fourth Step Inventory (With Eighth Step Amends List)
- 14 Fourth Step Inventory (With Types of Ninth Step Amends Added)
- 15 The “Voice of Addiction” vs. the “Voice of Recovery”
- 16 Four Paths of Divine Guidance
- 17-18 Listening to the “God-consciousness Within” (Two-Sided)

Unstapled: Four Handouts from One-Sided to Two-Sided (Two Pages Total)

- 19 Fourth Step Inventory (Blank)
- 20 Fourth Step Questions
- 21-22 Eleventh Step Guidance Meeting Format (Two-Sided)

Back to The Basics of Recovery

Suggested Guidelines

For the Sharing Partner:

- A. Your primary obligation is to attend all four sessions in order to take the Twelve Steps and offer encouragement and moral support to your partner. The conditions for being a sharing partner are:
1. to be actively involved in your own Twelve-Step recovery,
 2. to be willing to listen to what your partner has to say, and
 3. to keep everything that is shared strictly confidential.
- B. We will guide you through the Twelve Steps by reading the appropriate parts of the "Big Book" to you. If you follow the directions provided by the "Big Book" authors, you too will experience the **"personality change sufficient to bring about recovery."**
- C. The Fourth Step consists of a simple assets and liabilities checklist that you fill out during the second session. If you believe your partner satisfies the conditions of a **"closemouthed, understanding friend,"** please discuss your checklist with him or her. If your inventory contains specific items that you feel must be shared with a third party such as a person of the clergy, an attorney, a psychologist, or a counselor, explain this to your sharing partner. Make a commitment to your partner as to when, where, and with whom you will share those portions of your checklist.
- D. Between the third and fourth sessions, share your Eleventh Step guidance with your partner so he or she can see how two-way prayer is working in your life.

Back to the Basics of Recovery

Suggested "Big Book" Passages for Taking the Twelve Steps (Fourth Edition ~ Standard Size "Big Book")

Introduction

Who are we? pg. xiii: 5 (1) and pg. xiv: 0 (1-6)
What do we have to offer? pg. 17: 3 (1-6)

Surrender (Steps 1, 2 and 3)

Step 1: *We admitted we (had a problem)—that our lives had become unmanageable.*

Physical symptoms: pg. xxx: 5 (1-3, 5-8); pg. 44: 1 (4-7)
Mental symptoms: pg. xxviii: 4 (1-6) and pg. xxix: 0 (1-9); pg. 23: 1 (3-10) and pg. 23: 2 (1-9); pg. 30: 1 (4-10)
Psychic change: pg. xxix: 1 (1-7)
Unmanageability: pg. 52: 2 (3-8)
First Step question: pg. 30: 2 (1-3)

Step 2: *Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

Lack of Power: pg. 45: 1 (1-4) and pg. 45: 2 (1-3)
Where do we find the Power? pg. 55: 2 (1-7), pg. 55: 3 (5-7)
Look within: pg. 55: 4 (3-4)
What if the newcomer doesn't believe? pg. 46: 1 (3-8)
Second Step question: pg. 47: 2 (1-3)

Step 3: *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood (God).*

A life run on self-will: pg. 60: 4 (1-8)
Selfishness blocks us from God's will: pg. 62: 1 (1-8) and pg. 62: 2 (1-8)
A life guided by the vision of God's will: pg. 62: 3 (1-4, 6-8) and pg. 63: 1 (1-4)
Third Step prayer: pg. 63: 2 (2-8)

Sharing (Steps 4, 5, 6 and 7)

Step 4: *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

Explanation: pg. 63: 4 (1-2) and pg. 64: 0 (1-5)
Assets and liabilities checklist: pg. 64: 1 (1-7)
Fill out liabilities side of the checklist first: pg. 64: 2 (1-6)
Sponsor does the writing: pg. 13: 3 (1-4)
What do we inventory?
Resentments: pg. 64: 3 (1-2, 6-9)
We overcome our resentments with forgiveness: pg. 66: 4 (1-2), pg. 67: 0 (1-8), and pg. 67: 1 (1-2)
Fears: pg. 68: 1 (1-3)
We overcome our fears with faith: pg. 68: 2 (1-4) and pg. 68: 3 (4-10)
Harms: pg. 69: 1 (1-6)
We overcome our harms with amends: pg. 69: 3 (2-4)

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

We share our inventory: pg. 72: 2 (4-10)

With whom? pg. 73: 4 (1), pg. 74: 0 (1-9), and pg. 74: 1 (1-4)
This Step may be temporarily postponed: pg. 74: 2 (2-6)
How do we take this Step: pg. 75: 1 (1-4)

Step 6: *Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*

Explanation: pg. 76: 1 (1-7)
Sixth Step question: pg. 76: 1 (3-5)

Step 7: *Humbly asked (God) to remove our shortcomings.*

Seventh Step prayer: pg. 76: 2 (1-7)

Amends (Steps 8 and 9)

Step 8: *Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*

Explanation: pg. 76: 3 (2-5)

Step 9: *Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*

Explanation: pg. 76: 3 (6-11)

Specific amends:

Direct: To people we dislike: pg. 77: 1 (9-14)

Direct: To creditors: pg. 78: 2 (1-12)

Living: Patience, tolerance, kindness and love: pg. 83: 1 (1-3, 7-10)

In-kind: pg. 82:1 (8-10)

Letters: To people who cannot be seen: pg. 83: 3 (1-5)

Guidance (Steps 10, 11 and 12)

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

Explanation: pg. 84: 2 (1-8)
Tenth Step process: pg. 84: 2 (8-14)
Tenth Step question: pg. 84: 2 (2-3)

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.*

Explanation of two-way prayer: pg. 85: 3 (1-2) and pg. 86: 0 (1-4)
When we retire: pg. 86: 1 (1-9)
Upon awakening: pg. 86: 2 (1-5)
How does God communicate with us? pg. 86: 3 (1-6)
How did God communicate with Bill W.? pg. 14: 2 (1-8)
Practice, practice, practice: pg. 87: 0 (1-9)
Throughout the day: pg. 87: 3 (1-3), pg. 88: 0 (1-7), and pg. 88: 1 (1)

Step 12: *Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to (others), and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

Explanation: pg. 89: 1 (1-7) and pg. 89: 2 (1-7)
Twelfth Step question: pg. 89: 1 (5)

Close

Program summary: pg. 164: 2 (1-10), pg. 164: 3 (1-6), and pg. 164: 4 (1)
There is a solution: pg. 25: 1 (1-12) and pg. 25: 2 (1-9)

The Four Spiritual Activities

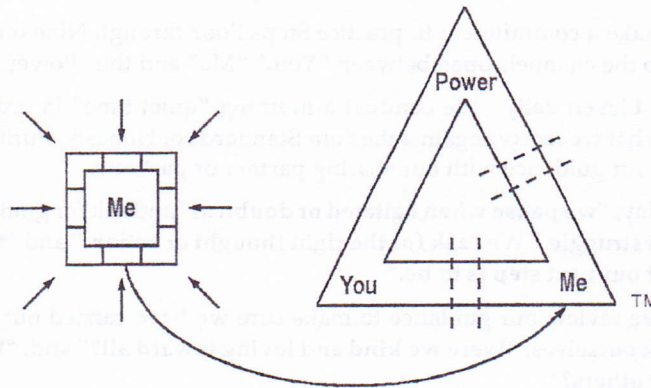
from which the Twelve Steps evolved

One: Surrender (Steps 1, 2 and 3)

Surrender is a three-part process that produces a change in perception. In Step One, we admit we have a problem. In Step Two, we either believe or become willing to believe that a **"Power greater than ourselves"** will solve our problem. In Step Three, we make a commitment to turn our problem over to **"this Power"**—a power that resides inside each and every one of us.

It is our selfish, self-centeredness that cuts us off from the Power. When it's all about me-me-me-me-me, we are in what we call the "prison cell of addiction." In terms of our spiritual journey, we are at Step Zero.

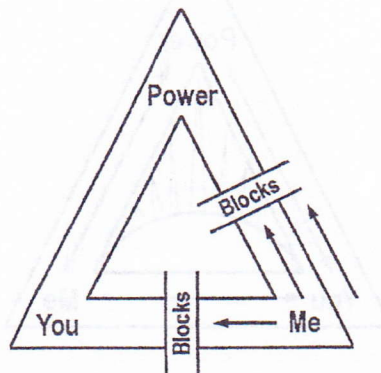
During our surrender, we ask the Power to free us from this prison cell—from **"the bondage of self."** When we do this, we see the world differently. Instead of feeling isolated and alone, we begin to feel connected to the Power and to **"our fellows."**



Two: Sharing (Steps 4, 5, 6 and 7)

Sharing involves identifying the manifestations of self that have kept us blocked from the **"Power greater than ourselves"** and from our families, friends, acquaintances and associates. In Step Four, we identify our shortcomings by making an inventory of our **"grosser handicaps"**

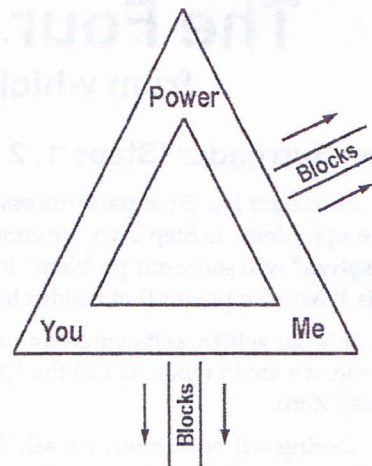
In Step Five, we discuss these shortcomings with a sharing partner. In Steps Six and Seven, we turn our assets as well as our liabilities over to the **"One who has all power"** and ask that we be given back what we need in order **"to be of maximum service to God and the people about us."**



Three: Amends (Steps 8 and 9)

In Steps Eight and Nine, **"We go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past."** When we make amends to those we have harmed and forgive those who have harmed us, the **"All Powerful, Guiding, Creative Intelligence"** removes the blocks that have separated us from the God of our understanding and from our fellows.

We let our actions rather than our words demonstrate to those we have harmed that we have changed. We are now acting according to God's will rather than according to self-will.



Four: Guidance (Steps 10, 11 and 12)

When we practice Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve on a daily basis, we remain connected to the "Power" and to each other. This is the essence of recovery.

In Step Ten we make a commitment to practice Steps Four through Nine on a regular basis. We do this so we can keep the channels open between "You," "Me" and the "Power."

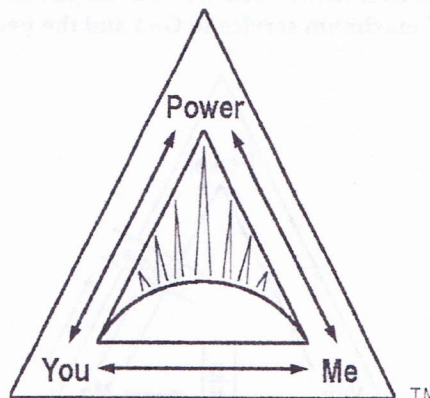
We practice Step Eleven daily. We conduct a morning "quiet time" in order to receive Divine guidance. We check what we receive against the Four Standards of Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love, and we discuss our guidance with our sharing partner or partners.

Throughout the day, **"we pause when agitated or doubtful"** and ask for guidance. **"We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle."** We **"ask for the right thought or action."** and **"that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be."**

In the evening, we review our guidance to make sure we have carried out what we have been directed to do. We ask ourselves, **"Were we kind and loving toward all?"** and, **"Were we thinking of what we could do for others?"**

In Step Twelve, we rely upon Divine guidance when carrying our life-saving message of recovery to others. We let the Power radiate through us to them.

In addition, we can receive Divine guidance by way of others. We call this three-way prayer—the Power communicating to us through another person. We also can petition the Power to intercede directly in other people's lives, and they can petition the Power to intercede in ours. The arrows point in all directions. We are now living in **"the sunlight of the Spirit."**



Back to the Basics of Recovery

Taking Steps Four through Nine using an Assets and Liabilities Checklist

Assumptions:

1. The sharing partners have an hour or so to spend together.
2. Each has made a commitment to be a "closed-mouthed, understanding friend."
3. They agree to ask each other questions and fill out each other's checklist.

The inventory consists of the events and situations that are bothering the sharing partner right now. If he or she has completed previous inventories, those items need not to be inventoried again. It usually takes only a few incidents to get down to the "causes and conditions" that are blocking the partner from a more intimate and effective two-way relationship with the "One who has all power."

The inventory is based on the principle that, "The healing is in the sharing, not in the writing." Another principle is, "We put nothing in writing that can incriminate us or others." That's why the inventory consists of nothing more than some names and a few circles.

First, the sharing partners fold their checklists so the assets are hidden from view.

Next, they ask each other the following questions:

Resentment Inventory----- Who or what are you angry at?

Fear Inventory-----Who or what are you afraid of?

Harms Inventory-----Toward whom have you been selfish?

Where have you been dishonest?

What about false pride—do you see yourself as better than or less than others?

Are you jealous of any relationship?

Do you envy anyone's possessions?

Where have you been lazy?

To the right of the applicable liabilities, the partner who is asking the questions (the "questioner") writes the generic equivalent of the names that represent the "people, institutions (and) principles" to be inventoried (Step Four). It is far more beneficial to take a few incidents through Step Nine than to write down so many names that the person answering the questions (the "respondent") becomes overwhelmed or discouraged and gives up on the process.

After the names have been added to the checklist, the "questioner" asks the "respondent" to describe the circumstances surrounding each of them. During the course of the discussion, the "questioner" explains to the "respondent" that, "we resolutely look for our own mistakes" and we "disregard the other person entirely" (Step Five).

If the "respondent" is angry about an event or situation, the "questioner" lets him or her know that we overcome our resentments with forgiveness. If the "respondent" is afraid, the "questioner" explains that we overcome our fears with faith. If the "respondent" has offended or has adversely affected someone, the "questioner" tells him or her that we make good on our past misdeeds with amends.

If the sharing partners agree that an amends needs to be made, the "questioner" circles the appropriate name or names. The circled names become the amends list (Step Eight).

Then, the "questioner" unfolds the checklist so they can look at the assets. Those assets with the least number of names to the left of them are the assets the "respondent" already has. Those assets with the most names to the left of them are the assets that will be strengthened as the result of making amends.

The "questioner" asks the "respondent" if he or she wants the liabilities removed. If the "respondent" does, then the "questioner" asks, "Are you now ready to let God remove from you all the things which you have admitted are objectionable?" (Step Six). If the "respondent" still wishes to hold on to any of the liabilities, they pray together for the willingness for those shortcomings to be removed.

Then, they say a prayer together (Step Seven).

"My Creator I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen."

Next, they talk about the details of each amends. For each event or situation, they decide which type of amends would be appropriate. The four types of amends described in the "Big Book" are "direct," "living," "in kind," and "amends to those who cannot be seen." They role-play each amends until they both agree on a course of action. They also decide when and where they will meet immediately following the amends so they can discuss what happened and determine if any follow-up action needs to be taken (Step Nine).

With this Assets and Liabilities Checklist, the sharing partners have everything they need to take Steps Four through Nine in about an hour.

Back to the Basics of Recovery

Fourth Step Questions

Resentment Inventory

1. Who or what are you angry at? -----

Fear Inventory

2. Who or what are you afraid of? -----

Harms inventory

3. Toward whom have you been selfish? -----

4. Where have you been dishonest? -----

5. What about false pride—do you see yourself as better than or less than others? -----

6. Are you jealous of any relationship? -----

7. Do you envy anyone's possessions? -----

8. Where have you been lazy? -----

During the discussion of each event or situation, ask your partner to “*resolutely look for (your) own mistakes. . . . Though a situation had not been entirely (your) fault, (you are) to disregard the other person entirely. Where were (you) to blame?*” (pg. 67: 2 (2-3, 4-7), edited).

Ask him or her, “Are you prepared to forgive those toward whom you feel resentment?” If not, then “*we ask God to help us be willing.*” (pg. 76: 1 (6-7)).

Ask, “Are you ready to overcome your fear with faith?” Together, “*We ask (God) to remove our fear and direct our attention to what (God) would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear.*” (pg. 68: 3 (7-10), edited).

In terms of harms, ask your partner, “*What are you “willing (to do) to set these matters straight?*” (pg. 67: 2 (10-11), edited). Keep in mind there are four types of amends: direct, living, in-kind and letters. Together, decide what would be the most appropriate “*course of action*” for each incident or circumstance.

Conclude the sharing session with a prayer. (pg. 76: 2 (1-7)).

Fourth Step Inventory

Liabilities
Watch for—

Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the “Big Book”
pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-6:edited)

Assets
Strive for—

Resentment		Forgiveness
Fear		Faith
Selfishness		Unselfishness
Dishonesty		Honesty
False Pride		Humility
Jealousy		Trust
Envy		Contentment
Laziness		Action

Assets and Liabilities Checklist

Fourth Step Inventory

Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the "Big Book"
 pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-6:edited)

Liabilities
 Watch for—

Resentment	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Myself</i>	<i>Court</i>	<i>God</i>
Fear	<i>Court</i>	<i>Relapse</i>	<i>Health</i>	
Selfishness	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Friend #1</i>	
Dishonesty	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Myself</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Friend #2</i>
False Pride	<i>God</i>	<i>Employer</i>		
Jealousy	<i>Family Member</i>			
Envy				
Laziness	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Myself</i>	
<i>Shame</i>	<i>Friend #2</i>			

Example of Assets and Liabilities Checklist After Answering Questions

Explanation of Terms

Fourth Step Assets and Liabilities Checklist

In the late 1930's, Dr. Bob, one of the pioneers of the Twelve-Step movement, developed an Assets and Liabilities Checklist, which he used to take thousands of people through the inventory and restitution process. Since then, various checklists have been used by sharing partners to bring those **"interested in a spiritual way of life"** to a greater understanding of the shortcomings that have prevented them from finding a spiritual solution to their difficulties, a solution that is based upon establishing an intimate, two-way relationship with the **"One who has all power."**

We have defined these shortcomings—the liabilities that have been blocking us from this **"Power"**—in a way that, hopefully, will provide a clearer understanding of their meaning:

RESENTMENT is the consequence of being angry or bitter toward someone for an extended period of time over some real or imagined insult. It is a hostile or indignant attitude in response to an alleged affront or personal injury.

FEAR is being afraid of losing something we have or not getting something we want. It manifests itself in many ways including phobia, terror, panic, anxiety and worry.

SELFISHNESS is concern only for ourselves, our own welfare or pleasure, without regard for, or at the expense of, others.

DISHONESTY involves theft or deception. It includes taking things that don't belong to us, cheating people out of what is rightfully theirs, and lying to or withholding the truth from others.

FALSE PRIDE is either feeling better than or less than someone else. Feelings of superiority include prejudice about race, education or religious beliefs; and sarcasm—putting someone else down to make us feel better about ourselves. Feelings of inferiority include self-pity, which is excessive concern about our own troubles, and low self-esteem—the lack of self-worth or self-respect.

JEALOUSY has to do with people—being suspicious of another's motives or doubting the faithfulness of a friend.

ENVY has to do with things—wanting someone else's possessions.

LAZINESS means lacking the will or the desire to work. Procrastination, which is postponing or delaying an assigned job or task, is a form of laziness.

Fourth Step Inventory

Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the "Big Book"
pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-6:edited)

Liabilities
Watch for—

Assets
Strive for—

Resentment	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Myself</i>	<i>Court</i>	<i>God</i>	Forgiveness
Fear	<i>Court</i>	<i>Relapse</i>	<i>Health</i>		Faith
Selfishness	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Friend #1</i>		Unselfishness
Dishonesty	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Myself</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Friend #2</i>	Honesty
False Pride	<i>God</i>	<i>Employer</i>			Humility
Jealousy	<i>Family Member</i>				Trust
Envy					Contentment
Laziness	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Myself</i>		Action
Shame	<i>Friend #2</i>				<i>Self-respect</i>

Example of Assets and Liabilities Checklist with Eight Step Amends List

Fourth Step Inventory

Liabilities
Watch for—

Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the "Big Book"
pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-6:edited)

Assets
Strive for—

Resentment	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Myself</i>	<i>Court</i>	<i>God</i>	Forgiveness
Fear	<i>Court</i>	<i>Relapse</i>	<i>Health</i>		Faith
Selfishness	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Friend #1</i> → Direct		Unselfishness
Dishonesty	<i>Ex</i> → Living	<i>Myself</i>	<i>Employer</i> → Living	<i>Friend #2</i> → Direct	Honesty
False Pride	<i>God</i>	<i>Employer</i>			Humility
Jealousy	<i>Family Member</i> → Letter				Trust
Envy					Contentment
Laziness	<i>Ex</i> → In-Kind	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Myself</i> → Living		Action
<i>Shame</i>	<i>Friend #2</i>				<i>Self-respect</i>

Example of Assets and Liabilities Checklist with Ninth Step Type of Amends Added

The "Voice of Addiction" vs. the "Voice of Recovery"

Using the "Big Book" Fourth, Tenth and Eleventh Step Tests to Distinguish Self-will from God's Will

Addiction / Self-will
(OR)

Recovery / God's Will
(AND)

Fourth Step Test

Selfish	←————→	Unselfish
Dishonest	←————→	Honest
Self-seeking	←————→	Forgiving
Frightened	←————→	Faithful

"Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened?"
("Big Book," p. 67, para. 2, lines 3-4)

Tenth Step Test

Selfishness	←————→	Unselfishness
Dishonesty	←————→	Honesty
Resentment	←————→	Forgiveness
Fear	←————→	Faith

"Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear."
("Big Book," p. 84, para. 2, lines 8-9)

Eleventh Step Test

Resentful	←————→	Forgiving
Selfish	←————→	Unselfish
Dishonest	←————→	Honest
Afraid	←————→	Faithful

"Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid?"
("Big Book," p. 86, para. 1, lines 2-3)

Four Paths of Divine Guidance

As described in the second paragraph on page 14 of the "Big Book"

These were revolutionary and drastic proposals (the proposals Bill is writing about are the Four Steps of Surrender, Sharing, Amends and Guidance), *but the moment I fully accepted them, the effect was electric* (Bill feels the sensation of electricity). *There was a sense of victory, followed by such a peace and serenity as I had never known* (Bill feels the additional sensations of victory, peace and serenity). *There was utter confidence* (Bill knows he is having spiritual experience). *I felt lifted up, as though the great clean wind of a mountain top blew through and through* (Bill sees himself on top of a mountain and hears the wind). *God comes to most men gradually, but (God's) impact on me was sudden and profound* (Bill knows he is having a rapid conversion experience).

<u>Method of Communication</u>	<u>Path</u>
<p>True Seeing (Visualizing)</p> <p>Perceiving, detecting or experiencing as if by sight. It includes, but is not restricted to, seeing or forming a mental image such as a mini-motion picture, photograph, or painting.</p>	<p>Sight</p>
<p>True Hearing (Listening)</p> <p>The process, function, or power of receiving auditory stimuli such as sounds, noises or tones. It includes, but is not restricted to, "the still small voice," words, music or songs.</p>	<p>Sound</p>
<p>True Feeling (Sensing)</p> <p>A generalized bodily consciousness or sensation. It includes, but is not restricted to, touch, smell, or feelings of warmth or cold. Manifestations include goose bumps, hair standing up on the back of the neck, or a tightening of the chest or stomach.</p>	<p>Sensation</p>
<p>True Awareness (Understanding)</p> <p>Knowledge, or intelligence that produces ideas, concepts or observations. It includes, but is not restricted to, inspiration or intuition.</p>	<p>Knowing</p>

Listening to the “God-consciousness Within”

Step Eleven ~ Prayer and Meditation

On Awakening ~ “Big Book” pages 86-87

Each morning, we practice a “quiet time,” similar to the way Bill W. described his “quiet time” on page 13 of the “Big Book.” During this time alone with God, we discover the most important and practical thing we can ever learn—how to listen to the “God-consciousness within.” All we need is the willingness to try it honestly. Every person who has done this consistently and sincerely has found that it really works.

1. Set aside time to meditate.

At first, we may have difficulty getting quiet and listening. But with practice, we will find the “quiet time” more and more effective and productive, because the “quiet time” brings us closer and closer to the Indwelling Spirit. The “quiet time” is an essential part of our morning surrender, because when we surrender our will, we can then listen for God’s will.

God has a plan for our lives and during our “quiet times” much of this plan is revealed to us. The quality of the guidance we receive is in direct proportion to the amount of time we spend alone with God.

2. Relax and take it easy.

We can enhance our spiritual connection by practicing some deep breathing exercises. There are many techniques available. They help put the mind at rest, shut down the “committee,” and alleviate obsessions and cravings.

We assume a comfortable position and enter into our “quiet time” with an expectancy that it will work. We maintain an attitude of reverence, gratitude and humility.

We let our imagination “go loose.” Thoughts, ideas and impressions will begin to come into our heart and mind. We need to be alert and receptive to all of them.

3. Write down or dictate, either during or after the period of meditation, the guidance you receive, so you won’t forget it and have something to review “at night.”

Writing or otherwise recording our thoughts, feelings and images is the key to the process. We don’t try to clear our mind. Rather, we just monitor it.

We don't sort out or edit what we receive until our "quiet time" is over. A thought, feeling or image comes quickly and it can escape just as quickly if we fail to record it.

Be honest. Record everything.

4. Test the guidance to determine if it is based in "the realm of the material" (self-will) or "the Realm of Spirit" (God's will).

We take a good look at what we have recorded. Not every thought, feeling or image we receive comes from God.

How do we distinguish between those that come from self-will and those that are of God's will? We test them using the first four items on the Fourth Step Assets and Liabilities Checklist. As we mentioned earlier, the liabilities are the OR side of the sheet and the assets are the AND side.

5. Check the guidance with a sharing partner or partners.

When the flow of thoughts, feelings and images slows down, we stop. We take a good look at what we have written, and we discuss our guidance with a sharing partner or partners. Since we can only see ourselves through others, we need to check our guidance with those who are also actively engaged in two-way prayer. We talk over what we have written because, "More light comes in through two windows than one."

6. Follow through with the guidance that passes the test of forgiveness, faith, unselfishness and honesty.

We carry out the guidance that appears to us and others to be "God's will," but, we cannot be completely sure of the guidance until we go through with it. "A rudder will not guide a boat until the boat is moving." Very often the results will convince us we are on the right track. Keep in mind that God will never guide us to do anything that is not based in forgiveness, faith, unselfishness AND honesty.