STAYING SOBER WITHOUT GOD

A PRACTICAL 12-STEP COMPANION WORKBOOK

BASED ON THE BOOK BY JEFFREY MUNN, LMFT

Created by Cassie Jewell, LPC, LSATP

Please note that the majority of material included in this workbook can be attributed to Jeffrey Munn, not Cassie Jewell. This guide is an adaptation of Munn's suggestions on how to work the Practical 12 Steps from his book, *Staying Sober Without God.* This workbook was created with the author's permission in order to provide a format for working the Practical Steps and is meant to be used in conjunction with the book.

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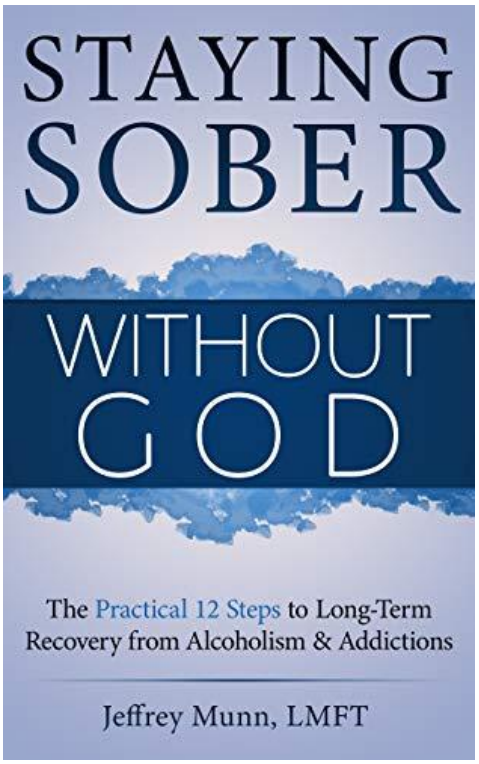

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STAYING SOBER WITHOUT GOD

The Practical 12 Steps to Long-Term Recovery from Alcoholism and Addictions

THE PRACTICAL 12 STEPS

1. Admitted we were caught in a self-destructive cycle and currently lacked the tools to stop it

2. Trusted that a healthy lifestyle was attainable through social support and consistent self-improvement

3. Committed to a lifestyle of recovery, focusing only on what we could control

4. Made a comprehensive list of our resentments, fears, and harmful actions

5. Shared our lists with a trustworthy person

6. Made a list of our unhealthy character traits

7. Began cultivating healthy character traits through consistent positive behavior

8. Determined the best way to make amends to those we had harmed

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would cause harm

10. Practiced daily self-reflection and continued making amends whenever necessary

11. We started meditating

12. Sought to retain our newfound recovery lifestyle by teaching it to those willing to learn and by surrounding ourselves with healthy people

STEP ONE

AA Version
Admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable

Practical Version
Admitted we were caught in a self-destructive cycle and currently lacked the tools to stop it

---

Take some time to explore your self-destructive cycle.

1. How did the cycle start? Was there an event that set it in motion?

2. When (or why) did you recognize you were in a self-destructive cycle?

3. Did your self-destructive cycle start quickly or was it a gradual process you didn't notice until it was well-established?

4. Why was it so attractive at first?

5. What reckless and/or impulsive behaviors did you engage in?

6. What were the first consequences you noticed?

7. How did you justify your behavior or make excuses?

8. How, specifically, is your addiction harming self and others? (What consequences – physical, emotional, financial, school/work, relationships, spiritual, legal, etc. – are you currently experiencing?)

9. What behaviors are you most ashamed of? How have you acted out of character?

10. What was your "rock bottom"? Was it an external event like jail or something internal (i.e. depression or thoughts of suicide)?

11. Have friends or loved ones expressed concerns about your addiction?

12. How have you tried to stop the cycle? If so, when and for how long?

13. What happens when you try to break out of the cycle? What emotions come up?

14. What thoughts and excuses does your brain conjure up to try and convince you to stay in the cycle?

15. When you try to stop, are there replacement behaviors that you start engaging in (i.e. overeating, excessive shopping, etc.)?

16. What are your reservations?

Only move on to the next Step when you truly believe that you are caught in a self-destructive cycle.

STEP TWO

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

Practical Version
Trusted that a healthy lifestyle was attainable through social support and consistent self-improvement

---

When you are free from the bonds of addiction, what do you want your life to look like?

1. What will you be doing?

2. Where will you live and with whom?

3. What will your daily schedule look like?

4. What will your goals be (both short-term and long-term)?

5. What will you accomplish?

6. What will your relationships look like? What kind of people will you spend your time with?

7. What hobbies will you pursue? (See Appendix for ideas.)

8. What will you do for personal development/self-improvement?

STEP THREE

AA Version
Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him

Practical Version
Committed to a lifestyle of recovery, focusing only on what we could control

---

Commit to a life of self-improvement, focusing on the things you have control over.

Write a mission statement, an oath, or a contract in which you make a pledge to persistently lean toward a recovery lifestyle. State your reasons for making this change, when you will begin it, and what your first actions will be. When finished, read your pledge to someone you trust (such as a sponsor or therapist).

STEP FOUR

AA Version
Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

Practical Version
Made a comprehensive list of our resentments, fears, and harmful actions

---

Thoroughly and mindfully explore your "emotional baggage."

MY RESENTMENTS
List all the people, groups, or institutions that you resent. Do your best to list as many as possible, even if the resentment feels nearly nonexistent. If you're having trouble remembering, try a systematic approach. Start with childhood and then go by grade when writing your school-age resentments. When you're looking at your adult years, you can go by jobs, areas in which you lived, or any theme that helps you ensure you're looking at everything.

Example:

Who	What They Did	Impact	My Part
My mother	Used to call me "stupid" when I would make a mistake.	I felt ashamed and unsure of myself. Lost confidence in myself. Thought my mom didn't love me.	I'm lacking empathy for her. She had an abusive childhood and probably thought what she was doing was OK.

Who	What They Did	Impact	My Part

Who	What They Did	Impact	My Part

Who	What They Did	Impact	My Part

MY FEARS
This list should include everything from embedded core beliefs to mild anxieties. It consists of three columns: What you fear, a core belief that drives this fear, and a reality-based replacement belief.

Examples of Distorted Core Beliefs and Resulting Fears:

Distorted Core Belief	Fears that Result
"The world is unsafe"	• Being the victim of a crime • Being betrayed • Suddenly losing a loved one • Getting into an accident
"I am unlovable"	• Being abandoned • Being alone • Being hated • Being judged
"I'm incompetent"	• Failing • Harming others unintentionally • Saying something stupid or embarrassing • Not being able to learn a new skill
"Nothing works out for me"	• Ruining relationships • Messing up a plan • Failing when trying something new • Being a bad parent to your future children

Examples of Reality-Based Beliefs:

Distorted Core Belief	Alternative Realistic Belief
"The world is unsafe"	There's always a small risk of something bad happening. I can minimize the chances by being safe.
"I am unlovable"	I have lovable traits that I can learn to nurture.
"I'm incompetent"	I am capable of learning just like everyone else. There are several things I'm knowledgeable about.
"Nothing works out for me"	Some things work out for me and some don't. I can choose to focus more on the things that do work.
"I'm beyond fixing"	It's never too late to make myself better.

My Fears	Distorted Core Belief	Alternative Realistic Belief

My Fears	Distorted Core Belief	Alternative Realistic Belief

MY HARMFUL ACTIONS

List the people, companies, institutions, etc. that you hurt in active addiction. In the first column, write a name. The second column is to write what you did. *Do not minimize. Do not make excuses.* A big piece of working Step Four is taking ownership for your choices and behaviors. In the third column, write how your action had (or may have had) an impact. Avoid using the phrase "I made him/her angry (sad, upset, etc.); stating that you "made" someone feel a certain way implies having power over them. (We cannot directly control anyone else's feelings.)

Who I Harmed	How I Hurt Them	Impact

Who I Harmed	How I Hurt Them	Impact

Who I Harmed	How I Hurt Them	Impact

Who I Harmed	How I Hurt Them	Impact

STEP FIVE

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

Practical Version
Shared our lists with a trustworthy person

Step Five gives you an opportunity to clear your conscious and to give yourself an opportunity to receive objective feedback about your behavioral problems.

Find a person to share with; it's best to avoid a family member or close friend. Ideally, you want to pick someone who is experienced in recovery, such as a sponsor or therapist. Having trust in that person is crucial. Face-to-face contact is preferred. Share your resentments, fears, and harmful actions from your Step Four columns. Read one row at a time, giving your partner the opportunity to provide feedback. Take notes. After you finish this step, spend 30-60 minutes alone with yourself to allow your mind to relax and sort through all the emotions that have just been stirred up. Don't read or watch TV or listen to music. After that time period is up, write a summary of what you learned, including any major insights.

(Step Five cont.)

STEP SIX

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

Practical Version
Made a list of our unhealthy character traits

Referring to character traits as "unhealthy" as opposed to "defective" implies that we can be healthy again. We are not defective, but have developed thought and behavior patterns that once served a purpose, but have become dysfunctional.

Start by reviewing the "My Part" column of your resentment list. What do notice? What character traits pop out at you as you read down the column? Take notes. (For example, if your fourth column states something like, "I took advantage of his trust," you may write down, "manipulation" or "dishonesty."

Write your observations/notes here:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Next, look at your list of fears. More specifically, look at your negative core beliefs. For example, if you have a negative core belief that you don't deserve to be happy, what unhealthy character traits might be fueling that belief? Insecurity? Self-hate? Self-judgment? All of the above? (Note: There will probably be a lot of repetition; it's what enables us to identify the patterns we're looking for.)

Write your observations/notes here:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Finally, review your "My Harmful Actions" list. Consider what negative character traits enabled you to cause that harm.

Write your observations/notes here:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Look over your notes and combine the unhealthy behaviors that fall under the same umbrella. (For example, "don't do much for others" and "only think about self" are both linked to selfishness.) To best identify core character traits, use single-word descriptions without explanations.

Use the following list to check off your unhealthy traits, writing in additional traits as needed. (Feel free to add on to this list later.)

MY UNHEALTHY CHARACTER TRAITS

☐ Selfishness	☐ Ignorance	☐ Judgmental
☐ Wastefulness	☐ Dishonesty	☐ Aggressiveness
☐ Jealousy/envy	☐ Entitlement	☐ Apathy
☐ Manipulation	☐ Arrogance	☐ Insecurity
☐ Rationalization	☐ Self-hate	☐ Greed
☐ Vindictiveness	☐ Impatience	☐ Vanity
☐ Self-pity	☐ Blame	☐ Stubbornness
☐ Self-righteousness	☐ Cynicism	☐ Cruelty
☐ Close-mindedness	☐ Gossiping	☐ Prejudice/bias
☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐

STEP SEVEN

AA Version
Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings

Practical Version
Began cultivating healthy character traits through consistent positive behavior

---

Consistently practice new healthy behaviors.

Review your list of unhealthy characteristics and rewrite them in the following section. For each unhealthy trait, think of a goal trait to counter it and write it down. For example, if you have "entitlement" as one of your unhealthy character traits, you would write "gratefulness" or "humility."

Unhealthy Trait	Healthy Goal

The next part of working this Step involves exploring the following healthy recovery traits: Honesty, humility, skepticism, generosity, assertiveness, responsibility, compassion, and self-care.

HONESTY

What does it mean to be honest?

Is it difficult for you to be truthful? Why or why not?

What are some *specific* ways you can practice honesty in your life? (Examples: "I will own up to my mistakes." "I will tell my spouse when I'm upset about something." "I will not tell a friend I'm planning on hanging out if I don't mean it.")

HUMILITY

What does it mean to have humility?

Is this something you struggle with? Why or why not?

What are some *specific* ways you can practice humility in your life? (Examples: "I will treat everyone with respect." "I will stop boasting.")

SKEPTICISM

How is skepticism a healthy quality?

Do you regularly practice healthy skepticism (i.e. having a willingness to engage in critical thinking and challenge what doesn't seem right)?

What are some things to be skeptical of and how can you respectfully challenge them? (Example: To carefully challenge the view that AA is the only way to get sober, you could start a conversation with, "I might be wrong, but…")

GENEROSITY

What does it mean to be generous?

Are you a naturally generous person?

_____

_____

_____

_____

On the list below, place a check next to any simple act of generosity that you would like to incorporate into your life. (Aim for at least one generous act per day.)

- ☐ Help someone carry groceries to their car or offer to put away their cart
- ☐ Pick up trash that isn't yours
- ☐ Do something nice for someone for no reason at all
- ☐ Mail a letter or greeting card to an old friend
- ☐ Bring treats to work for your officemates
- ☐ Give a meaningful compliment
- ☐ Leave a larger than normal tip
- ☐ Give up your seat on the bus
- ☐ Help someone take a photo
- ☐ Hold the elevator door open
- ☐ Pay the toll for the driver behind you
- ☐ Help a mother carry a stroller up or down the steps
- ☐ Put a coin in an expired meter
- ☐ Call or write a teacher, mentor, or therapist who had a positive impact on your life
- ☐ Help a friend or loved one pack to move
- ☐ Share an overheard compliment with the subject
- ☐ Use Amazon Smile for online shopping
- ☐ Say "thank you" to someone who made a difference
- ☐ Join a bone marrow registry
- ☐ Donate blood

Sources: https://localadventurer.com/list-of-random-acts-of-kindness-ideas/
http://www.oprah.com/spirit/35-little-acts-of-kindness/all
https://www.bradaronson.com/acts-of-kindness/

ASSERTIVENESS

What does it mean to be assertive? (In your answer, write about the difference between assertiveness and aggressiveness.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are you more assertive, aggressive, or passive?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How can you practice assertiveness:

With a significant other or spouse who criticizes you in front of his/her friends?

_____
_____
_____
_____

With a family member who continues to offer relationship advice, although you've made it clear it's unwelcome?

_____
_____
_____
_____

With a friend who regularly cancels plans at the last minute?

_____
_____
_____
_____

With your boss when he asks you to run his personal errands?

_____
_____
_____
_____

With an old using buddy who won't respect your recovery lifestyle?

_____
_____
_____
_____

With a pushy salesperson who tries to sell you something you don't want?

_____
_____

With a stranger who is rude to you?

RESPONSIBILITY

What does it mean to be responsible (vs. placing blame)?

Do you struggle to take ownership of your actions? Why or why not?

Write about how you can be responsible.

COMPASSION

What does it mean to have compassion?

Are you able to have compassion for those around you? (Explain your answer.)

How can you become a more compassionate person? (Include your thoughts on empathy.) Are you able to view others through a non-judgmental lens?

SELF-CARE

Why is self-care important in recovery?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Do you practice regular self-care? If not, what gets in the way?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What are some self-care practices you would like to incorporate into your life? Examples include daily exercise, getting a massage, taking regular mini-breaks throughout the work day, getting adequate rest at night, and taking time to read your favorite magazine. (For more ideas, Google "self-care"). List at least 10 self-care tips you can see yourself doing on a regular basis.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

STEP EIGHT

AA Version
Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all

Practical Version
Determined the best way to make amends to those we had harmed

---

Embark on the process of making amends.

Refer to your list of harmful actions from Step Four. Write each name below and then contemplate the harm you caused and how you might be able to make it right. (Remember: Making amends is not about saying you're sorry; it's about addressing the damage.) Consider if making amends is something that would potentially cause you undue hardship. If so, it may be worth it to explore ways that you can make the amends without putting an excessive burden on yourself. Some burden is appropriate, but you still need to live your life. Furthermore, consider if your amends may cause the person you hurt even more harm. Run it by another person in recovery before moving forward with a decision.

*Alternatively, you can use flashcards and write the name of the person harmed on one side and your amends on the other.

Who I Harmed	How to Make Amends

Who I Harmed	How to Make Amends

Who I Harmed	How to Make Amends

Who I Harmed	How to Make Amends

STEP NINE

AA Version
Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others

Practical Version
Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would cause harm

---

This Step is about doing the right thing so that you gain integrity. It's about clearing our conscience of guilt and shame so that we can walk around feeling free and unburdened by our past.

It may be helpful to "sort" your amends into three groups. One group is the "ready" group, the second is the "maybe" group, and the third is the "never" group. (This task is easier with flashcards.) The idea is that as you work your way through the first and second groups, you will likely be ready when it comes time to make amends to the people in your "never" group.

Refer to your "How to Make Amends" column from Step Eight. Use the following chart to sort your amends. Make direct amends when possible; face-to-face contact is preferred. Anticipate that the person may respond to your amends well... or they may not. Let them know you are open to hearing if there is any harm you left out of your amends. If they have specific requests (i.e. paying back money, providing a service), you don't have to answer on the spot. You can tell them that you'll get back to them later with an answer.

When you have made your amends, place a check next to that person's name and write a short description of what happened. (Note: Some amends will be impossible to make directly. For example, if you wronged someone who has since passed away, practice a "living amends." You can make things right by changing the way you live.)

Who I Harmed	Amends Category	Notes
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	

Who I Harmed	Amends Category	Notes
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	

Who I Harmed	Amends Category	Notes
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	

Who I Harmed	Amends Category	Notes
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	

Who I Harmed	Amends Category	Notes
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	
_____ ☐ Amends made	☐ Ready ☐ Maybe ☐ Never	

STEP TEN

AA Version
Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it

Practical Version
Practiced daily self-reflection and continued making amends whenever necessary

---

This step involves making an effort to be mindful of your behaviors throughout your daily interactions and to take ownership of your mistakes.

Step Ten is a "maintenance" step that requires daily self-reflection. Refer to the list below for ideas for working this Step. The idea is that as you become increasingly aware of your less-than-ideal behaviors, you will get better at preventing them.

- Reflect daily on any possible instances you might have caused harm. (If so, think about how you can make it right.)
- Journal every night about your interactions with others.
- Identify your personal values and recognize when your actions don't match up. (See Appendix for list of values.)
- Review your Step Seven; are your behaviors mostly healthy or unhealthy?
- At the end of the day, ask yourself what you could have done better.
- Share about your unhealthy characteristics with your sponsor or therapist and request feedback.
- Complete a written 10-Step inventory at the end of every day. (See Appendix for 10th Step Daily Inventory Worksheet based on the Big Book from AA.)

STEP ELEVEN

AA Version
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

Practical Version
We started meditating

The ultimate goal of this Step is to regularly engage in the practice of mindfulness.

Schedule time to meditate every day. If you're unaccustomed to mindful/meditative practices, start with 2-minute sessions; your eventual aim is at least 20 minutes per day.

There are countless books, magazines, and websites on the topic of mindfulness. See below for a list of sites to get you started.

Helpful Websites for Meditation and Mindfulness:

American Mindfulness Research Association (https://goamra.org/)

Mindful Awareness Research Center (https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/)

Mindful: Healthy Mind, Healthy Life (https://www.mindful.org/)

Mindfulness Exercises (https://mindfulnessexercises.com/)

Tara Brach (https://www.tarabrach.com/)

A short mindfulness exercise from *The Free Mindfulness Project* (http://www.freemindfulness.org/breath):

Mindfulness of Breath

Preparation

Sit or lie in a comfortable position. You may choose to close your eyes or keep them open, if you are feeling tired it may be useful to let just a little bit of light in to keep you alert.

The Breath

Begin by gently moving your attention onto the process of breathing. Notice the sensations of each breath as it happens, whether you focus on the rise and fall of your chest or abdomen, or on the feeling of the breath at the nostrils. Really feel what it is like to breath, just observing it as it happens.

As you engage in this exercise you may find that your mind wanders, caught by thoughts or by noises in the room, or bodily sensations. When you notice that this happens, know that this is okay, and simply notice the distraction but gently bring your attention back to the breath.

Ending the Exercise

Take a few moments to yourself, connecting with your experience in the present moment. Expand your awareness from the breath into the space around you, and as you feel comfortable to do so, opening your eyes and bringing the exercise to a close.

Reflections

Take a few moments to think about what your experience was in this exercise, and how you feel in the present moment.

STEP TWELVE

AA Version
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

Practical Version
Sought to retain our newfound recovery lifestyle by teaching it to those willing to learn and by surrounding ourselves with healthy people

---

The basic principle of this Step is to help others as a means of further enforcing what you've learned. Helping others is imperative to sobriety for three reasons. Firstly, it reinforces the lessons we've learned, Secondly, it provides a sense of meaning. And thirdly, helping is the right thing to do.

Ideas for Working Step Twelve:

- Attend 12-step meetings and talk to the newcomers. Answer their questions and provide guidance if they are open.
- Share what you've learned in person and in online communities and forums. (But don't preach!)
- Sponsor others.
- Do service work.
- Work in the addictions field as a professional or peer-support specialist.

WHAT THE STEPS MISS

Working the 12 Steps will challenge you to be a better person and help you stay sober. However, there are several key areas that the Steps miss. The Steps do not guarantee a healthy and balanced life (although they can help). The following sections cover other matters linked to sustained recovery.

Mental Health

It's common for individuals with substance use disorders to also have a mental health condition (in part due to overlapping genetic vulnerabilities and biological similarities). Additionally, a person may start using drugs or alcohol to "self-medicate" when they experience symptoms; this can eventually lead to addiction. The Steps are not a substitute for psychotropic medication or professional counseling. If you've been diagnosed with a mental health disorder such as major depression, PTSD, or anxiety, you may need to see a psychiatrist and/or therapist for treatment.

Physical Health

Just as the Steps are not a substitute for mental health treatment, they can't replace a healthy diet and exercise. Nutrition has a significant impact on mood and energy levels. Foods that are high in saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium affect well-being. If your diet consists of junk food and soda, you will feel sluggish and irritable. Aim for a plant-based diet; avoid processed foods, sugar-sweetened beverages, and red meat. Drink water, black coffee, and unsweetened tea.

Exercise, too, plays a powerful role when it comes to health and well-being. Increased activity not only improves mood and energy, it reduces the risk of cancer, diabetes, heart disease, etc. It may also help you sleep better at night; restful sleep is crucial for health.

My Exercise Goals:

I will engage in _____ minutes of _____ (type of exercise) _____ times per week.

I will engage in _____ minutes of _____ (type of exercise) _____ times per week.

I will engage in _____ minutes of _____ (type of exercise) _____ times per week.

(For exercise ideas, review the "Sports" section in "List of Hobbies" in the Appendix.)

Communication

Effective communication is essential; communication is what connects us. If you're not able to express yourself in a straightforward and assertive manner, your needs won't be met; you'll end up feeling angry, resentful, etc. On the flip side, if you're unable to listen to what others are telling you, they may get hurt and/or feel misunderstood. Efficient communication involves assertive expression and active listening. Assertiveness and listening are skills that can be learned and strengthened. Like any skill, you must practice to become proficient.

The four main types of expression are passive communication, aggressive communication, passive-aggressive communication, and assertive communication.

Passive (Indirect)	Not saying anything. Allowing mistreatment. Ignoring a problem and hoping it goes away. Passive communication often requires us to deny or ignore our own needs.
Aggressive (Direct)	Violence, verbal abuse, intimidation. Aggression is sometimes effective in the short-term, but generally pushes people away. It is toxic to relationships and can get you in all kinds of legal, personal, and professional trouble.
Passive-aggressive (Indirect)	Trying to retaliate against someone in an indirect or disingenuous way. It's spitting in someone's food, gossiping, or speaking in a vague manner and "dropping hints" about what you need.
Assertive (Direct)	Saying what you need to say with confidence, clarity, and integrity. You don't have to be mean to be assertive, but you don't have to sugar-coat either. It's telling someone to sop when they are crossing a boundary. It's asking for what you need without guilt or shame.

The following written statements are examples of passiveness, aggression, and passive-aggression. Rewrite each sentence as an assertive statement (but don't change the message).

Co-worker to co-worker (voice raised): "Why in the world did you think it was a good idea to say that in the meeting? Now everyone thinks you're an idiot."

_____

_____

_____

Wife to husband: "I'm exhausted. I wish there weren't so many dishes to do."

_____

_____

_____

Friend to friend: "It's not like you're ever on time anyway. I should have bought tickets to a later show."

_____

_____

_____

Girlfriend to boyfriend (disappointed): "Of course I don't mind that you're going out with the guys! Missing date night is no big deal."

_____

_____

_____

Mother to teenage daughter (yelling): "I didn't raise you to be a whore! Where did you stay last night?"

_____

_____

_____

The first and last statements are examples of aggressiveness. The fourth is passiveness. The other two are forms of passive-aggression.

Active listening is the second ingredient of effective communication. To actively listen, give your full attention and use non-verbals (maintaining eye contact, smiling, etc.) to demonstrate interest. Do not formulate your response; simply listen. When the speaker is finished, reflect back what was said to show comprehension. Alternatively, you can ask the speaker to clarify.

Skills for Active Listening

1. Non-verbal involvement. Give the speaker "cues" that you're listening. (Maintain eye contact, smile, nod, etc.)
2. Give your full attention. Do not allow yourself to become involved in your thoughts, distracted by your surroundings, or focused on what you will say when it's your turn to speak.
3. Summarize, paraphrase, and reflect. This shows that you understood what was said and/or how the speaker feels/thinks.
4. Ask clarifying questions if needed.

What are some of the things that prevent you from listening actively?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Fun, Hobbies, and Communities

Leisure is part of a balanced and healthy life, but when a person is recovering from addiction, they often forget to include leisure in their relapse prevention plan. It falls through the cracks because it seems like an elective compared to working the Steps, attending therapy appointments, reading AA literature, etc. However, leisure is an essential part of recovery and wellness. Plus, what's the point of getting sober if you're going to be miserable?

You may have forgotten *how* to have fun without drugs and alcohol. Maybe you can't remember what you enjoyed before addiction took over. Or, maybe you started using at such a young age you never discovered what you liked. Alternatively, your new-found recovery may have provided you with the capability to return to a former beloved hobby. Now is the time to explore new activities or to reengage in a rewarding pastime.

Review "List of Hobbies" (Appendix) and circle activities that appeal to you. If you can think of additional hobbies you'd like to try (or take up again), write them here:

_____

_____

_____

Develop a structured leisure plan by answering the following questions:

What hobby/activity are you choosing? _____

Why? _____

Is this something you will do alone or with others? _____

Do you need any supplies? If so, list them here:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Does this activity require specialized training? _____

What is the estimated cost of this hobby and how will you pay for it?

_____

What do you need to do to prepare for your new hobby? (Hire a babysitter, make space in your home, receive medical clearance from a doctor, read an instructional manual, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Pick a date to start: _____

How much time will you devote to your hobby per week? _____

Are there any additional hobbies you want to plan for?

_____

_____

_____

_____

In addition to engaging in meaningful hobbies, we require social connection. Are you satisfied with the relationships in your life or would you like to meet new friends? 12-step meetings provide great opportunities for meeting people. You can also join a club, interest group, or online community. Making friends without the buffer of drugs and alcohol may feel awkward at first, but is well worth the effort. Don't be afraid to take healthy risks. (See Appendix for hobbies that provide opportunities for social connection.)

"Atheists and agnostics deserve just as much of a chance at recovery as believers do."

APPENDIX

LIST OF HOBBIES

Animals & Nature: Attend pet shows Beekeeping Berry or apple picking Bird watching Butterfly garden Butterfly watching Care for indoor plants Composting Dog training Dog walking Fossil hunting Grow and tend to a fruit tree Grow an indoor herb garden Grow plants from seedlings Hang humming bird feeders Horseback riding Learn how to identify various plants Mushroom hunting Nature walks Adopt a pet Pet fostering Pet sitting Plant a flower bed Go on a swamp tour Tend to a vegetable garden Topiary Visit a farm Visit an aquarium Visit zoos and/or nature centers Watch Animal Planet Go whale watching	**Literature, Music, & Dance** Acting Attend art galleries or shows Attend literary fests Ballroom dancing Belly dancing Blogging/guest blogging Break dancing Editing Go to book signings Go to the library Join a book club (either in-person or online, i.e. Goodreads) Listen to music Play/learn an instrument Puppeteering Rapping Reading Sell your artwork on etsy.com Singing Song-writing Submit articles/opinion pieces/essays to magazines and newspapers Swing dancing Take a dance class (swing, hip hop, ballroom, etc.) Take a drama/improv class Take voice lessons Wikipedia editing Write a book Write poetry Write short stories
Arts & Crafts: Drawing Candle making Collages Coloring Crocheting Design greeting cards Flower arranging	**Outdoor & Adventure:** Backpacking Boating Bungee jumping Camping Canoeing Caving Fishing

Glassblowing Jewelry making Knitting Lettering/calligraphy Mixed media art Mosaic making Origami Painting (watercolor, oils, acrylics, etc.) Paper crafts (including paper mache) Photography Pressed flower craft Pottery Quilting Scrapbooking Sculpting Sewing Sketching Soap making Weaving Wood carving	Geocaching Go-Karting Hiking Hot air ballooning Kayaking Laser tag Mountain biking Mountain climbing Paintball Parasailing Rocking climbing Sailing Scuba diving Skiing Sky diving Snowboarding Snorkeling Waterskiing White water rafting Wilderness survival
Collections: Action figures Antiques Autographs Barbies Books (classics, signed copies, etc.) Christmas tree ornaments Comics Fun socks Hot sauce from around the world Movie or music memorabilia Obsolete tech (i.e. outdated cell phones, tape players, etc.) Original artwork Plates Purses, shoes, and other accessories Recipes Records Retro video games Rocks and/or crystals Shells Souvenirs Sports memorabilia Stickers	**Self-Improvement & Social:** Advocate Attend 12-step meetings and other support groups Attend workshops Bullet journaling Daily positive affirmations and self-inventory/reflection Join a club Join a gym Join a Meetup group Join a political campaign Journaling Keep a gratitude journal Listen to podcasts Make a vision board and update it regularly Meditation Read research Read self-improvement books Social media Stretching Take a class (i.e. self-defense, a foreign language, etc.) Use a habit tracker app

Ticket stubs Toys Vases Vintage items	Volunteering Watch documentaries Watch inspirational Ted Talks Wear a fitness tracker Yoga
Cooking & Baking: Braising Bread making Cake decorating Canning Cheese making Coffee roasting Cookie decorating Grilling and BBQ Host dinner parties Kombucha brewing Learn ethnic and regional recipes Learn recipes from cooking shows Make "fun foods" for kids Make homemade ice cream Make jam or jelly Make jerky Participate in competitive food festivals Pasta making Pastry and confection making Pickling Pie making Raw diet meals Recreate menu items from your favorite restaurants Reduced fat cooking Sautéing Slow cooker meals Smoothie making Soup, sauce, and stock making Sushi making Take a cooking class Tea brewing Try new recipes on a regular basis Use an air fryer Use a dehydrator Use Pinterest for inspiration Vegan cooking Watch Food Network for inspiration	**Sports:** Archery Badminton Baseball Basketball Biking Body building Bowling Boxing Cricket Darts Disc golf/frisbee Fencing Football/flag football Golf Gymnastics Hockey Ice skating Jogging/running Knife throwing Lacrosse Martial arts Poker Racquetball Racing Riding a unicycle Roller derby Rugby Skateboarding Soccer Surfing/body boarding Swimming Table football Table tennis Tennis Thai Chi Volleyball Weight training Wrestling

Entertainment: Attend movies, operas, plays, and musicals Bingo Board games Card games Chess Dine out and try new restaurants Escape rooms Gaming Go to museums Go to poetry slams or open mic nights Jigsaw puzzles Karaoke Murder mystery shows Read entertainment/celebrity magazines See your favorite bands/artists live Standup comedy Theme parks Watch Netflix series that you really enjoy	**Travel:** Alaskan cruise All-inclusive resorts Beach vacations Caribbean cruise Cross country train trip Explore your home town as if you're a tourist Guided group tours Mediterranean cruise Road trip See the Northern Lights Travel to all the continents in the world Travel to all the states in America Trip to Las Vegas Visit the Grand Canyon Visit the New Seven Wonders of the World Visit the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World Go on free walking tours
Home Improvement & DIY: Add a backsplash to your kitchen Bathroom remodel Build a shed Build furniture Design a meditation room, home office, "man cave," or "she shed" DIY headboard Fireplace makeover Hang shelves Home organization Install smart home technology Kitchen remodel Paint an accent wall (or update the house!) Paint old cabinets Redecorate a room Stencil or wallpaper Update a closet Update furniture Update lighting Use chalk paint or metallic spray paint	**Misc. Hobbies:** Astrology/astronomy Billiards Couponing Creating DIY home products Fantasy sports Genealogy Ghost hunting Hair styling/braiding Hula hooping Juggling Keeping up with the latest fashions Kite flying Learning magic tricks Makeup application Metal detecting Model building People watching Storage unit auctions Sunbathing Yard sale shopping/thrifting

The Wikipedia webpage, "List of Hobbies" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_hobbies), was utilized as a reference for this list.

LIST OF VALUES

Abundance
Acceptance
Accountability
Achievement
Adventure
Advocacy
Ambition
Appreciation
Attractiveness
Autonomy
Balance
Being the best
Benevolence
Boldness
Brilliance
Calmness
Caring
Challenge
Charity
Cheerfulness
Cleverness
Community
Communication
Commitment
Compassion
Cooperation
Collaboration
Consistency
Decisiveness
Dedication
Dependability
Diversity
Empathy
Encouragement
Engagement
Enthusiasm
Ethics
Excellence
Expressiveness
Fairness
Family
Friendships
Flexibility
Freedom
Fun
Generosity
Grace
Growth
Flexibility
Happiness
Health
Honesty
Humility
Humor
Independence
Individuality
Joy
Kindness
Knowledge
Leadership
Learning
Life-long learning
Love
Loyalty
Making a difference
Mindfulness
Motivation
Optimism
Open-mindedness
Originality
Passion
Performance
Personal development
Proactive
Professionalism
Quality
Recognition
Risk taking
Safety
Security
Service
Spirituality
Stability
Peace
Proactivity
Professionalism
Punctuality
Relationships
Reliability
Resilience
Resourcefulness
Responsibility
Responsiveness
Security
Self-control
Selflessness
Serenity
Service
Simplicity
Stability
Success
Teamwork
Thankfulness
Thoughtfulness
Traditionalism
Trustworthiness
Understanding
Uniqueness
Usefulness
Versatility
Vision
Warmth

Contribution	Innovation	Perfection	Wealth
Creativity	Inspiration	Playfulness	Wellbeing
Credibility	Integrity	Popularity	Wisdom
Curiosity	Intelligence	Power	Zeal
Daring	Intuition	Preparedness	Zest

Source: https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/self-awareness/values

10TH STEP DAILY INVENTORY WORKSHEET (BASED ON THE BIG BOOK OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS)

Constructively review your day by taking inventory before you go to bed.

1. Was I resentful?	❒ Yes	❒ No
2. Was I selfish?	❒ Yes	❒ No
3. Was I dishonest	❒ Yes	❒ No
4. Was I afraid?	❒ Yes	❒ No

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, write about what happened, if you owe an apology, and what you could have done better:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Have I kept something to myself that should have been discussed with someone else immediately? If so, write about it below.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Was I king and loving toward all?	❒ Yes	❒ No
Was I thinking about myself most of the day?	❒ Yes	❒ No
Was I thinking about what I could do for others?	❒ Yes	❒ No

If you slipped back an unhealthy pattern today, don't feel defeated. Instead, remind yourself that you have control over your actions. Make a choice to engage in healthier behaviors tomorrow.

W., Bill. (2001). *Alcoholics anonymous: Big book, 4th ed.* New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services

12-STEP (& SIMILAR) SUPPORT GROUPS FOR RECOVERY

Support Groups for Addiction

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (AA)

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS (NA)

HEROIN ANONYMOUS (HA)

PILLS ANONYMOUS (PA)

COCAINE ANONYMOUS (CA)

CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS (CMA)

MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS (MA)

NICOTINE ANONYMOUS (NICA)

CAFFEINE ADDICTS ANONYMOUS (CAFAA)

CHEMICALLY DEPENDENT ANONYMOUS (CDA)

ALL ADDICTS ANONYMOUS (AAA)

RECOVERIES ANONYMOUS (R.A.)

PHARMACISTS RECOVERY NETWORK

INTERNATIONAL DOCTORS IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (IDAA)

INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (ILAA)

ASSOCIATION OF RECOVERING MOTORCYCLISTS (A.R.M.)

For Families and Others Affected by Addiction and Mental Illness

AL-ANON/ALATEEN (FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF ALCOHOLICS)

NAR-ANON (FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF ADDICTS)

ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS (ACA)/DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS (FA)

PARENTS ANONYMOUS

NAMI FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP (FOR ADULTS WITH LOVED ONES WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS)

S-ANON/S-ATEEN (FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF SEXAHOLICS)

CODEPENDENTS OF SEXUAL ADDICTION – COSA (FOR THOSE WHOSE LIVES HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY ANOTHER'S COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR)

GAM-ANON (FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF GAMBLERS)

Secular Alternatives

SMART RECOVERY (SELF-MANAGEMENT AND RECOVERY TRAINING)

WOMEN FOR SOBRIETY

RATIONAL RECOVERY

SECULAR AA

SECULAR ORGANIZATIONS FOR SOBRIETY (SOS)

LIFERING SECULAR RECOVERY

Additional Support Groups & Organizations

VIOLENCE ANONYMOUS (VA)

ADULT SURVIVORS OF CHILD ABUSE ANONYMOUS (ASCAA)

SURVIVORS OF INCEST ANONYMOUS

LDS FAMILY SERVICES

PORN ADDICTS ANONYMOUS (PAA)

SEX ADDICTS ANONYMOUS (SAA)

SEXAHOLICS ANONYMOUS

SEX AND LOVE ADDICTS ANONYMOUS (SLAA)

SEXUAL COMPULSIVES ANONYMOUS (SCA)

SEXUAL RECOVERY ANONYMOUS (SRA)

CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS (CODA)

EMOTIONS ANONYMOUS

DUAL RECOVERY ANONYMOUS

DEPRESSED ANONYMOUS

SOCIAL ANXIETY ANONYMOUS (SPA/SOCAA)

PTSD ANONYMOUS

SELF MUTILATORS ANONYMOUS

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE ANONYMOUS

OBSESSIVE SKIN PICKERS ANONYMOUS (OSPA)

CLUTTERS ANONYMOUS (CLA)

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS (OA)

FOOD ADDICTS ANONYMOUS (FAA)

FOOD ADDICTS IN RECOVERY ANONYMOUS

RECOVERY FROM FOOD ADDICTION

EATING DISORDERS ANONYMOUS (EDA)

DEBTORS ANONYMOUS (DA)

UNDEREARNERS ANONYMOUS (UA)

SPENDERS ANONYMOUS

WORKAHOLICS ANONYMOUS

GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS

INTERNET & TECH ADDICTS ANONYMOUS (ITAA)

ONLINE GAMERS ANONYMOUS (OLGA)

OFFENDERS ANONYMOUS

REENTRY ANONYMOUS

GROW IN AMERICA (PEER SUPPORT FOR MENTAL ILLNESS)

HEARING VOICES NETWORK

AA Sites for agnostics and atheists: AA Agnostica and AA Beyond Belief

ADDICTION & RECOVERY WEBSITES

Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction

Center for Substance Abuse Research

Center on Addiction

The Coalition to Prevent ADHD Medication Misuse

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Drug Misuse Prevention and Recovery

Moderation Management

MOMS*TELL*

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

National Institute on Drug Abuse

Recovery Research Institute

SAMHSA

SMART Recovery

Start Your Recovery

William White Papers

World Health Organization on Management of Substance Abuse