The "Montclair Morning Meditation Meeting" in Montclair NJ presents for 6 weeks only...

"HERE ARE THE STEPS WE TOOK" THE 1940'S A.A. BEGINNERS' MEETINGS

A BIG BOOK TWELVE STEP WORKGROUP with Lena N. & Barefoot Bill

Held on 6 consecutive Tuesday nights from 7:30 – 9:10PM

Note: You are encouraged to bring your sponsor and anyone you are sponsoring. "Temporary Step sponsors" will be available, if needed, for anyone who wishes to <u>take</u> the Steps with us during these sessions. We are also looking for help from anyone who has done the work out of the Big Book and is willing to act as a "temporary Step sponsor" for those who don't have one during these five weeks. Please bring your Big Book, something to write with, and try to attend all five sessions.

Session 2 & 3 – Steps Two through Four

June 3rd & June 10th, 2008

Step and Information Packet

Thoughts on Step 2 & 3

Water is everywhere & in all living things - we cannot be separated from water. No water, no life. Period. Water comes in many forms - liquid, vapor, ice, snow, fog, rain, hail. But no matter the form, it's still water.

Human beings give this stuff many names in many languages, in all its forms. It's crazy to argue over what its true name is. Call it what you will, there is no difference to the water. It is what it is.

Human beings drink water from many containers - cups, glasses, jugs, skins, their own hands, whatever. To argue about which container is proper for the water is crazy. The container doesn't change the water.

Some like it hot, some like it cold, some like it iced, some fizzy, some with stuff mixed in with it—like alcohol, coffee, whatever. No matter. It does not change the nature of the water.

Never mind the name or the cup or the mix. These are not important.

What we have in common is thirst. Thirst for the water of Life!

As it is with water, so it is with God. - Robert Fulghum

Chris D.: When I first got into the Steps, my sponsor asked me, "Chris, do you believe in God?"

And I said, "Yeah Jerry, I believe in God. But ya know what Jerry? I believe He's after me. I knew there was a God for YOU, but I believe if God catches me I'm going to be in a world of hurt. I believe He can't wait to do me in."

That was my plight.

And my sponsor said, "Chris, let's talk about that. Do you remember the day you got sober?"

I said, "Yeah."

He said, "Were you doing anything particularly NICE that day?"

And I thought back through my experience and I said, "No."

He said, "Did you tell a lie on that day?"

"Yeah, probably more than one."

"Did you try cheating someone out of something that day?"

"Yeah."

"Alright, so let's say that when you LEAST deserved it, God granted you the gift of physical sobriety. Does that sound like a God that's after you?"

What a novel idea! At my worst, not at my best - ya see, I always thought that I had to get good to find God. I now believe that God accepts me for the way I am.

Right then, right there, I had a spiritual awakening.

And that's what we do here at Alcoholics Anonymous. We don't tell the newcomer that comes walking through the door, "Hey, go straighten yourself out first and then come back and see us." We accept them for who they are. When I came to AA I was a liar, a cheat, a thief, a stinking 130-pound drunk that could not be trusted and you looked at me and said, "Chris, please come back tomorrow?"

If you (another human being) could do that, if you could accept me the way I was when I came here, why couldn't God?

The question the Big Book gives us for a beginner taking Step 2 is found on page 47:

"Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?"

For those of us who are going through the Steps more than once or who already have a belief in a Higher Power and want to have a deeper experience with this Step, there are two questions that may be considered when taking Step 2 (the bottom question can be found in the middle of page 53):

- 1) "Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself that can take me beyond where I am now in every area of my life, past here, past the experience I've already had? Do I believe there are realms of peace, love, freedom, happiness, understanding, wisdom, areas of consciousness, existence and power that I can't even imagine?"
- 2) "...we had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing. What was our choice to be?" You can easily see why this last question is important. The areas of our life that we don't include God (where we are not loving, not honest, not dealing with reality or truth, not unselfish, not acting with integrity, etc.) inevitably become unmanageable, out of balance, emotionally and spiritually uncomfortable, and show up on our 4th Step sooner or later. Barefoot Bill

<u>The Step Three Parable</u> (by Steve B.):

A drunk is staggering along the street and he meets God. "God, I can't do this anymore," he says. "Please, please, will you give me sobriety?" God says, "Sobriety isn't free, how much money do you have?" The drunk reaches into his pocket. "Fifty bucks." "I'll take it," says God, "you're sober." The man stands up straight, drunk no more. It feels pretty good. "Yeah but, God?" "Yes?" "I know I gave you my money willingly. But, you see, I need to get gas for my car." God says, "You have a car?" "Well, yes." "You didn't tell me that. I'll take your car too." "But..." God interrupts and says, "I'll take the car. It's part of the price for your sobriety." "But how will I get to work?" "You have a job? I'll take the job, too." "But God, how will I pay my mortgage?" "Mortgage? You have a house? I'll take that too." "But God, my family. How will I take care of them if You have my house and my job?" God says to him gently and lovingly: "In order to keep your sobriety; you must give Me these things. But I will let you drive My car, as long as you remember it's MY car. You can have the job, but remember you're working it for ME. It's My house but I will let you live in it. And as for the family, they are MY family but I will trust you to take care of them."

PRIMARY INSTINCTS OF LIFE WHICH CREATE SELF									
SOCIAL INSTINCT	SECURITY INSTINCT	SEX INSTINCT							
SELF-ESTEEM— What I think of myself, high (Positive = self-love) or low (Negative = self-hate)	POCKETBOOK—My desire for anything of a material nature (money, property, buildings, etc.) to be secure.	My desire to have sex and reproduce AMBITIONS—My goals or plans for the future regarding my sex life.							
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS— My relations with other human beings and the world around me.	EMOTIONAL SECURITY—My general sense of personal well-being, usually based on my demand for my own way: either to dominate those about me or to become overly dependent upon them.								
AMBITIONS— My goals or plans for the future to gain self-esteem and personal relationships (to be liked, accepted, and respected).	AMBITIONS—My goals or plans for the future to gain material wealth and/or emotional security.								
	SELF WILL								
	WRONGS								
DECENTED AND AND AND AND AND AND AND AND AND AN		HADING OD HADING							
RESENTMENTS	FEAR	HARMS OR HURTS							
"Wrong Thinking or Wrong Judging" Feelings of bitter hurt or indignation, which	"Wrong Believing" Feelings of anxiety, agitation, uneasiness,	"Wrong Acting" Wrongful acts, which result in pain, hurt							
comes from rightly or wrongly held feelings of being injured or offended.	apprehension, etc.	feelings, worry, and financial loss, etc., for others and also self.							

DEFINITIONS OF WORDS USED IN STEP FOUR

AMBITION Our goals or plans for the future, or what we want or wanted.

ARBITER One chosen to judge.

BITTERNESS Pain, suffering, ill will or regret.

DEFECT Lack of something necessary for completeness. Same as shortcoming - what blocks me off from God and others.

DISHONEST The act/practice of telling a lie, cheating, deceiving, stealing. Perception not based in reality or truth.

EXACT Very accurate, precise, correct.

FATAL Causing death.

FAULT Something done wrongly, an error or mistake.

FEAR A feeling of anxiety, doubt, insecurity, dread, agitation, uneasiness or apprehension. Feeling threatened, scared,

jealous, nervous, anxious or defensive. You may find more fears if you ask yourself, "When am I most tempted to

be dishonest? What are my 'concerns' and what do I worry about?"

FINITE Limited.

FRIGHTENED A temporary or continual state of fear. See above definition for fear.

FUTILITY Uselessness.

HARM Damaging/diminishing people (physically, mentally, financially, emotionally, and/or spiritually) or things, sexual

misconduct (using our sexual energy in harmful/selfish/casual ways), physical or verbal attack, stealing (taking that which is not offered), dishonesty, gossip, half-truths, being inconsiderate or offensive, not showing up fully for those dependant on us, not taking good care of our body or mind. (See Step 8 in AA 12 & 12 for other ways we harm).

IDEAL Goal, aim, conception, standard, mental image; our biggest and best idea.

INCONSIDERATE Without thought or consideration of others.

INFINITE Without limits, boundless.

INSTITUTION Significant practice or relationship in a society or an established organization or corporation, especially of public

character.

INVENTORY Written list of items (used to evaluate personal characteristics).

JEALOUSY Feeling of rivalry, unfaithfulness, or the loss of another's exclusive devotion.

MISTAKE A wrong action or statement (caused by faulty judgment).

MOLD To give shape to, to exert influence on.

MORAL Honest, truthful. Relating to the practice, manners, or conduct of men/women, as social beings, in relation to each

other, and with reference to right and wrong.

NATURE The essential characteristic of something (root cause, the truth of where the wrong began – what created the wrong).

PARADOXICALLY A statement that seems contradictory or opposed to common sense, but is true.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS My relations with other human beings and the world about me.

POCKETBOOK Anything of a material nature (money, property, buildings, jewelry, etc.)

PRIDE Image or ego. An excessive and unjustified opinion of oneself: either positive (self-love) or negative (self-hate). An

alcoholic's pride is usually based on how we think others view us.

PRINCIPLE Rule or code of conduct, fundamental law or assumption.

RESENTMENT Comes from the Latin word "sentire" which means "to feel", and when you put "re" in front of any word, it means

"again", so the word resent means "to feel again".

SANE Healthy, able to appraise the effect of one's actions.

SECURITY My general sense of personal well being, usually based on my demand for my own way: either to dominate those

about me or to become overly dependent upon them. Has two possible viewpoints - financial security or emotional

security.

SELF-CENTERED Occupied or concerned only with one's own affairs.

SELF-ESTEEM What I think of myself, how I view myself: either high (positive = self-love) or low (negative = self-hate).

SELFISH Concerned with one's own welfare or interests and having little or no concern for others.

SELF-SEEKING Constant looking to further one's own interest.

SHORTCOMING Falling short of what is expected or required. Same as defect - what blocks me off from God and others.

SOUND Showing good judgment, healthy, free from flaw or defect.

SUBJECTED To study motive.

SUSPICION To have doubt or mistrust, with little or no proof.

WRONG Judging, believing or acting incorrectly.

<u>Step Four Prayer</u> – "God please help me with this, show me what I need to know. Please protect me, Your will not mine be done. Thank You." (Please say this pray along with the Third Step Prayer each time you start writing, when you run out of thoughts on what to write, and at each new inventory sheet.)

Step Four Resentment Prayer: "God, (name), is perhaps a spiritually blocked person. Whether they are or not, this resentment is blocking ME spiritually. Please help me to show (name) the same tolerance, compassion, and patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend. Please forgive me for being angry and enable me to stop clinging to this resentment. Please remove this resentment and show me how to take a kindly and tolerant view of (name). Please show me how I can be helpful to (name). Thy will be done!" (Pray this prayer for each person toward whom you have a deep resentment each morning until you know in your innermost being that each resentment has been removed. Then cross the name off the list. Continue these prayers until all names have been removed. It was my experience that this may take several weeks or months, but it works.) Step Four Fear Prayer – My Creator, please allow me to identify and honestly review my fears, to see underneath their symptoms to their root cause. Please give me the courage to let You demonstrate through me what You can do.

RESENTMENT INVENTORY PROMPT SHEET

Here is a list of people, institutions and principles that may be helpful in your Resentment Inventory. Feel free to add to this list for it is certainly not complete.

PEOPLE INSTITUTIONS PRINCIPLES

Father (Step)
Marriage
God (or any Deity)
Mother (Step)
Church
Bible
Sisters (Step)
Religion
Brothers (Step)
Races
Ten Commandments
Grandfather (Step)
Law
Satan

Grandmother (Step) Authority Death
Aunts Government Life after death
Uncles Education System Heaven

CousinsHospitalsHellClergyHealth Care SystemSinPoliceCorrectional SystemAdulteryLawyersMental Health Sys.Golden Rule

JudgesWelfareOriginal SinDoctorsPhilosophySeven Deadly SinsEmployersNationalityLove, honor, obeyEmployeesRehabsReciprocity Theory

Employees Rehabs Reciprocity Theory
Co-Workers Mental Institutions Twelve Steps
In-Laws I.R.S. Twelve Traditions

In-Laws I.R.S. Twelve Traditions
Husbands Twelve Concepts
Wives "Do unto others..."
Creditors "Can't be too thin"

"Love thy neighbor"

School Friends "Don't put off until teachers tomorrow..."

Life Long Friends Old guiding sayings

Childhood Friends

Life Long Friends Old guiding sayings
Best Friends

Best Friends
Acquaintances

"Bible-Thumpers"
Girl Friends
Boy Friends
Parole Officers

Probation Officers
A.A. Friends
"Weak AA"

Friends in the Military

RESENTMENT INVENTORY

I listed people, institutions and principles with whom I am angry. (64:3) I am resentful at: (This includes grudges, regrets, envy, prejudices, and those we're annoyed with, agitated by, or that "let us down".)	I asked myself why I am angry? (64:3) The Cause (Do not minimize here or be "spiritual" or nice. Allow yourself to be as critical, as judgmental or as petty as you feel.)	that threa (See in bo	he fetene pg. 4 xes l ects P O C K E	ollo d on 4 de belo m S E C U R I T	wir in fin ow i y: A M	ng v terf itio if af (64 P R I	Frected 1:3, 65 P R E E R L	ort, with. put X d.) S E E X	selfish, dishonest (with myself and others), self- seeking and frightened? Where was I to blame? (67:2) E Included here might also be: 1-What are the actions I took or failed to take in

RESENTMENT INVENTORY

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FEAR INVENTORY PROMPT SHEET

Here is a list of fears that may be helpful in your Fear Inventory. Please feel free to add to this list for it is certainly not complete.

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Fear Of Abandonment
                                        Fear Of Not Being In Control
Fear Of Acceptance
                                        Fear Of Not Having Sex
Fear Of Anger
                                        Fear Of Not Having Enough $
                                        Fear Of Not Having A Job
Fear Of Animals
Fear Of Authority
                                        Fear Of Parents
                                      Fear Of People
Fear Of Physical Pain
Fear Of Being Alone
Fear Of Being Found Out
Fear Of Being In A Relationship Fear Of Police
Fear Of Change
                                        Fear Of Public Speaking
Fear Of Confrontation
                                        Fear Of Other Races
                                        Fear Of Rejection
Fear Of Creditors
Fear Of Crying
                                        Fear Of Relapse
                                        Fear Of Religion
Fear Of Disapproval
Fear Of Diseases
                                        Fear Of Responsibility
Fear Of Doctors
                                        Fear Of Sex
Fear Of Drowning
                                        Fear Of Sin
                                        Fear Of Sobriety
Fear Of Dying
Fear Of Failure
                                        Fear Of Stealing
Fear Of Fear
                                        Fear Of Success
Fear Of Feelings
                                        Fear Of The Truth
                                        Fear Of The Unknown
Fear Of Gangs
Fear Of Gays
                                        Fear Of Violence
Fear Of Getting Old
                                        Fear Of Wealth
                                        Fear Of Women
Fear Of God
                                        Fear Of Working
Fear Of Gossip
Fear Of Government
                                        Fear Of Writing Inventory
Fear Of Guns
                                       Fear That There Is No God
Fear of Having Children
Fear of Having No Children
Fear Of Heights
Fear Of Hospitals
Fear Of Hurting Others
Fear Of Insanity
Fear Of Insects
Fear Of Insecurity
Fear Of Intimacy
Fear Of Jail
Fear Of Lies
Fear Of Living
Fear Of Loneliness
Fear Of Losing A Child
Fear Of Losing A Spouse
Fear Of Losing A Parent
Fear Of Love
Fear Of Making Amends
Fear Of Men
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Fear Of Not Being In A Relationship

FEAR INVENTORY

I listed my fears. (68:1) (Remember to include the fears identified in the Resentment Inventory, and consider the opposite of the fear.) See Fear in "Definitions of Words Used in Step 4".	I asked myself why I had them. (68:1) (The justification you tell yourself for having the fear, usually another underlying fear. A real or perceived sense of loss or loss of control.)	But did not I, myself, set the ball rolling? (67:3) How did self-reliance fail me? (68:1) How am I contributing to the fear? This includes considering if my own selfishness and self-centeredness was involved. (62:1) (This is similar to the fourth column of Resentments. Also, is the fear imagined or real?)	Just to the extent that we do as we think God would have us, and humbly rely on Him, does He enable us to match calamity with serenity. We direct our attention to what God would have us be. What, perhaps, is a better way? (68:2 & 3)								

FEAR INVENTORY

I listed my fears. (68:1)	I asked myself why I had	But did not I, myself, set the ball rolling? (67:3)	Just to the extent that we do as we think God
(Remember to include the fears identified in the Resentment Inventory, and consider the opposite of the fear.) See Fear in "Definitions of Words Used in Step 4".	I asked myself why I had them. (68:1) (The justification you tell yourself for having the fear, usually another underlying fear. A real or perceived sense of loss or loss of control.)	How did self-reliance fail me? (68:1) How am I contributing to the fear? This includes considering if my own selfishness and self-centeredness was involved. (62:1) (This is similar to the fourth column of Resentments. Also, is the fear imagined or real?)	would have us, and humbly rely on Him, does He enable us to match calamity with serenity. We direct our attention to what God would have us be. What, perhaps, is a better way? (68:2 & 3)

SEX & HARMS INVENTORY

	arous	unjust se (in T (69:1)	ifiably HEM):	I reviewed <u>my own</u> conduct over the years past. Where was I at fault? Where had I been				
Whom did I hurt? (69:1) (Directly or indirectly. Perhaps begin with the people you've had sex with and then branch out to all relations, even those not involving sex.)	J E A L O U S Y	S U S P I C I O N	B I T T E R N E S	selfish, dishonest or inconsiderate? (69:1) What were/are my motives? (70:1) (Remember to go back and put on the Fear Inventory any new fears you find while reviewing your past sex & harms conduct.)	What should I have done instead? (69:1)			

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RELATIONSHIP IDEAL

Now about sex. Many of us needed an overhauling there. But above all, we tried to be sensible on this question. It's so easy to get way off the track. Here we find human opinions running to extremes - absurd extremes, perhaps. One set of voices cry that sex is a lust of our lower natures, a base necessity of procreation. Then we have the voices who cry for sex and more sex; who bewail the institution of marriage; who think that most of the troubles of the race are traceable to sex causes. They think we do not have enough of it, or that it isn't the right kind. They see its significance everywhere. One school would allow man no flavor for his fare and the other would have us all on a straight pepper diet. We want to stay out of this controversy. We do not want to be the arbiter (judge) of anyone's sex conduct. We all have sex problems. We'd hardly be human if we didn't. What can we do about them?

During and after the sex inventory, we try to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life. We subject each relation to this test - is it selfish or not? We ask God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them. We remember always that our sex powers were God-given and therefore good, neither to be used lightly or selfishly nor to be despised and loathed.

Whatever our ideal turns out to be, we must be willing to grow toward it. In other words, we treat sex as we would any other problem. In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. The right answer will come, if we want it.

God alone can judge our sex situation. Counsel with persons is often desirable, but we let God be the final judge. We realize that some people are as fanatical about sex as others are loose. We avoid hysterical thinking or advice.

To sum up about sex: We earnestly pray for the right ideal, for guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity, and for the strength to do the right thing. If sex is very troublesome, we throw ourselves the harder into helping others. We think of their needs and work for them. This takes us out of ourselves. It quiets the impurious (which means "urgent") urge, when to yield would mean heartache. (pages 68-70)

Since it suggests that we come up with a future sex (relationship) ideal, please use this form to develop one. For you, what would be the ultimate? What is usually included here are: 1) ideal attributes and behaviors in OURSELVES that we would like to bring to a relationship, 2) ideal attributes and behaviors that we would look for in SOMEONE ELSE that we might consider having a relationship with. (If you are currently in a relationship, #2 would then become: positive attributes and behaviors that my partner already has that I can appreciate and notice more.), and 3) attributes and behaviors that would describe what an ideal relationship would generally look like.

WHAT IS EXPECTED BETWEEN WEEKS TWO & THREE

- 1) Please start saying the Third Step Prayer each morning and when needed throughout the day.
- 2) Please read through this entire handout and make copies of each of the three inventories provided so that you will have blank forms to write on. What is suggested is to make 10 copies of the Resentment Inventory, five copies of the Fear Inventory, and 10 copies of the Sex & Harms Inventory.
- 3) As you are writing, please start saying the Step Four Prayer (found at the bottom of page 4 in this handout packet) and finish ONLY the first two columns of your Resentment Inventory, together top to bottom, until you are finished with it. Keep in mind that you may have more than one resentment toward any one person, place or thing. PLEASE MAKE THIS A PRIORITY AND TRY TO DO SOME WRITING EVERY DAY.
- 4) Please bring back this Handout Packet with you next week as we continue with the directions for the Resentment Inventory and the rest of Step 4.
- 5) Sponsors please talk to your sponsees at least every other day to make sure they are writing and to deal with any issues that prevent writing every day.

WHAT IS EXPECTED BETWEEN WEEKS THREE & FOUR

- 1) Please continue saying the Third Step Prayer each morning and when needed throughout the day.
- 2) If you haven't done so already, please make copies of each of the three inventories provided in your packet so that you will have blank forms to write on. What is suggested is to make 10 copies of the Resentment Inventory, five copies of the Fear Inventory, and 10 copies of the Sex & Harms Inventory.
- 3) As you are writing, continue saying the Step Four Prayer (found at the bottom of page 4 in this handout packet). If you wrote some everyday you are probably finished or are close to finishing the first two columns of the Resentment Inventory. After finishing the first two columns, then start doing the third column, each row one at a time, top to bottom, before going on to the next row top to bottom, until you are finished with the third column.
- 4) Only when you are COMPLETELY finished with the 3rd column of the Resentment Inventory, please then begin to pray the Step Four Resentment Prayer (found at the bottom of page 4 in this handout packet) for each of the people you wrote down in the first column of your Resentment Inventory.
- 5) After saying the Step Four Resentment Prayer for each of the people you wrote down in the first column, then begin writing the FOURTH column of your Resentment Inventory top to bottom.
- 6) After finishing the entire Resentment Inventory, then begin saying the Step 4 Fear Prayer (which can be found at the bottom of page 4 in this handout packet) and continue writing the Fear Inventory and then the Sex & Harms Inventory, as well as create your future relationship ideal. Please remember to do the Inventories one column at a time, top to bottom, before going on to the next column. PLEASE MAKE THIS A PRIORITY AND TRY TO DO SOME WRITING EVERY DAY.
- 7) Please make an appointment for doing your 5th Step so that when you are done with the 4th Step you immediately share it in your 5th Step. It may take most of the day to do a 5th Step so schedule an entire day to do this life-changing event.
- 8) Sponsors please talk to your sponsees at least every other day to make sure they are writing and to deal with any issues that prevent writing every day.