

Archie M. - I found myself thinking that weeding a garden was similar in a lot of ways to taking the Tenth Step. No matter how honest our taking of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Steps, there's no guarantee that we won't find ourselves growing a new crop of the uglies that have to be weeded out. Using the Tenth Step - and using it often - can uncover a defect before it becomes firmly rooted. As I yanked and pulled and dug out crabgrass, I thought how much easier it would have been to remove all those weeds when they were tiny. Character defects, too, have a way of taking hold unless uprooted early.

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Get a watch that beeps every hour & acknowledge God each time.

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Turn boring events into time with God: pray/talk to God while standing on line at the store or while waiting at a red light.

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Page 85 – "Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. "How can I best serve Thee, Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly." What's the vision of God's will in all your activities?

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Serenity Prayer Exercise:

(Day 1) God...

(Day 2) Grant me the Serenity

(Day 3) To accept the things I cannot change

(Day 4) Courage to change the things I can

(Day 5) Wisdom to know the difference

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Meditate on having no name/identity & no past history.

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When you see or hear an emergency vehicle please pray for everyone involved; those you see or hear, their loved ones, the dispatcher, the victims and their families, the medical people involved, etc.

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Step 10 & 11: turn statements into prayers.

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The Five Finger Prayer:

1. Your thumb is nearest to you. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember. To pray for our loved ones is, as C. S. Lewis once said, a "sweet duty."

2. The next finger is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct, and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right directions. Keep them in your prayers.

3. The next finger is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God's guidance.

4. The fourth finger is our ring finger. Surprising to many is the fact that this is our weakest finger, as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need your prayers day and night. You cannot pray too much for them.

5. Lastly comes our little finger, the smallest finger of all. Which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, "the least shall be the greatest among you." Your pinky should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.

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

In short, it makes sense that after seeing the cause of your pain, seeing your defects of character to go out and do those things again, it will only lead to more heartache, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, eating, spending, gambling, etc. I expected everything to change overnight, but it did not, but it did change slowly, those fears that tortured me were not torturing me so much. Those resentments would kick in again, a scream that those people deserved what they got or how could that person say or do that to me (self-pity). What I did have was a little thought that if I looked at defects and became willing to change, things must get better! If you break your leg, you know you did it. You are taught by the doctor what you must do in order for those bones to knit together again! You know the cause, you know the effect and you know the solution.

But the leg is still broken! So, this is where I see step 10 doing the business! In short, we practice opposites, when fear tells you to turn back; you go forward and face it. When resentment starts justifying its presence, just look at your defects, and look at your reactions! When the past re-emerges, as it will and guilt bites at you again, say "my Higher Power forgives me" so don't believe those guilty thoughts, look for the good, think, "That was then, this is now".

Things from the past will pop into the mind at the strangest of times. Just write it down and look at it, just as you did in Step 4 and 5. When the depressing feelings come back, say, "You have been here before, so do your business and go when you're ready".

Continuing to take an inventory does not mean that you become self-obsessed, it means, just look, observe, but don't get involved with those thoughts that say, "The best way not to fail is not to try". The S.A.S, their motto is, "Who dares wins" a spiritual motto is, "Who cares wins".

I get ratty at times but I say I am sorry promptly, and let that be the end of it. If you are feeling resentful, fearful or angry say, "What is going on in my life?". "What has changed between now and the last time you were happy?", "What is going on in your life?"..

So, again the solution is practice opposites

### **Step 11 - Sought through, prayer and meditation, to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for use and the power to carry that out.**

In step 3, we decided to look for a new manager, because we were unhappy, addicted, obsessive etc. We thought, "Well, I tried everything my way, and the result was pain! So, that is where I suppose, humility starts to come into our lives.

Whether you believe in a Christian God, or a Higher Power, or just have a belief in wisdom, then this step will work. If your mind is full of neurotic thoughts then they have to be replaced with a belief system, a different attitude. I love the serenity prayer:

I state acceptance, what is acceptance but a way of stopping anger, remember acceptance does not mean you agree, it means you stop the thoughts in your head spinning around like a washing machine! Your God wants you to be happy right now. The present is a result of the past, and the future will be a result of the present.

If, say, you miss a train, don't think, "I have to wait another 30 minutes", think "I had to learn this lesson sooner or later, it is better I learn it now, than putting it off to the future". If you had to get that train, (you will never know this) but, just maybe you would have fallen over someone's suitcase, breaking your neck and then being confined to a wheelchair. You will never know that, but it is less strain on the nerves to accept the situation, than blowing your top through impatience and self-pity. So if its Gods will for you to be at that station right now, or it is bad luck, take the less painful way out by accepting.

Gods will is for you not to suffer emotionally, it is fair to say that you may have put so much effort into your recovery that you will never have any problems. Well, the 3 'D's will come biting at your ankles. Death, dis-ease and disappointment. This is because you are now on a spiritual path, it does mean that you and your loved ones will never get sick, never die or never ever get disappointed, wrong, very wrong! Reality has to be looked at and understood. The Power has to come into your life to accept the 3 'D's, to stop fighting the 3 'D's, but to work on that power, that power can be the power of prayer, wisdom, faith or sheer guts to beat the problem.

Remember, having peace of mind is not having no problems, but living with unsolved problems. Peace of mind, I remember the first time I had a space in between thoughts in my head, it was a spiritual experience. I knew what was on offer, I had never had a quiet mind, it had always been resentful, guilty, fearful or disappointed, and asking why.

To have a mind that is quiet, tranquil, serene, that is your creators design for you! Gods will, your creator has created lovely people, lovely places, it wants you to find them. If you do nothing then nothing will happen! I found that the 8 'R's helped to get on this path to peace and when I slipped off the 8 'R's, it helped me get back on them. They are the keys to a peaceful life.

Right Understanding

Right aspiration    Wisdom

Right speech

Right action        Morality

Right Livelihood

Right effort

Right mindfulness                      Concentration  
Right concentration

There are also 4 'T's, that help me and they are four noble truths.

Truth of suffering  
Truth of the cause of suffering  
Truth of there is a way out of suffering  
Truth of the way out of suffering.

When you look at the 4 'T's it is a fact that every human being suffers from the 3 'D's, that is true, no one escapes them, not the rich, not the poor, not the intelligent, not the illiterate, no one!!!  
So, this is where Right Understanding comes in. To understand, not to agree, but to understand suffer when we want life different to what it is, was, or is going to be. We crave, we want to always be happy and to never let life's realities come our way, or the way of our loved ones! So, this is where right aspiration comes in. Aspiration is another way of saying desire. To know that there is a way out of mental turmoil. If we apply the following, life becomes less of a burden.

Right speech  
Right action  
Right livelihood  
Right effort  
Right mindfulness  
Right concentration.

When you look at a lovely countryside, hear a bird sing, or feel a lovely breeze, my senses are alive. No more dulling of the emotions today, I feel grief when someone dies, I feel it, I accept it and I get on with my life! I know the feeling of grief never stays. Today, when I feel happy, I also know that that will pass. The cliché "This shall pass" does not only mean that the bad times will leave, it also means that death, disease and disappointment will be our companion. Not one person who has ever been born has escaped the 3 'D's, so don't expect you will. This is where meditation comes in, seeing reality and nurturing wisdom! Slowing the mind down.

When I meditate I picture myself drinking or using drugs again. I meditate, I watch the scenario unfold in my mind, I see how it can be if I don't stay on the path. The twelve steps. These are my tools, I reflect on them, I visualize my own death, and I realize that I, like everyone else is not perfect !

I think of the joy my children give me (as I write this I have a 20 year old daughter who has never seen me drunk, aggressive, violent or acting in any selfish type of manner. I also have a 10-year-old daughter who has only ever been loved by me. I learnt from my step 4 and step 5 how I suffered from other people's actions, so my girls only get love from me).

I like to reflect about my lovely dog, Marlon, who died, aged 18. I cried when he died. I cried in front of my daughter over the loss of my loyal, lovely dog (as I write I am crying thinking of him). I miss him, but not in a self-pitying way, but in a sad way!

Power mentioned in this step. Power to bring peace into my life and to others. That power can be tolerance, gratitude, acceptance, humility, honesty, courage. They are powers greater than my defects. If you have a problem with a God then just practice opportunities and reflect using Insight Meditation.

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#### **Step 10 - I continue to take personal inventory and when I am wrong I promptly admit it**

What is your plan to allow time for reflection each day?

What new behaviors would you like to try to make your program more effective? How would you go about implementing these?

What kind of behaviors and attitudes do you need to be most vigilant against to keep from your addictive behaviors?

What are your triggers for addictive behavior? How can you guard against them or prepare for them?

What are some amends or remedies that you should make when you find out that you are wrong?

**Step 11 - Through prayer and meditation I seek to improve my conscious contact with God as I understand God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for my life and the power to carry that out**

Can you recall anytime that your life was heading in the wrong direction? If so, what brought you back? Describe this in detail.

How would you describe your beliefs about God and a Higher Power to a child?

What are your favorite sources of wisdom and knowledge about healthy values?

Has anything you ever read convinced you to change in some fundamental or deep way?

If you were stranded on a desert island with only one book, which book would you take? Why?

If you had only one week to live and unlimited resources, who would you gather around you and how would you pass the time?

Write out a complete form of what you would like your obituary to say.

What do you believe will happen to you after you die?

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**Step 10 Reflection Questions**

After prayerful consideration, write out the answers to the following questions:

- 1) What does it mean for me to "enter the world of the Spirit"? Where have I been?
- 2) What is my vision of God's will for me:
  - a) Spiritual?
  - b) Physical?
  - c) Emotional?
  - d) Intellectual?
  - e) Financial?
  - f) Relationship(s)?
  - g) Work?
  - h) Community?
- 3) When I'm disturbed, do I reflect on the source of the trouble within me?
- 4) When I realize that I've been resentful, dishonest, fearful, or selfish, do I:
  - a) Ask God AT ONCE to remove it?
  - b) Tell someone IMMEDIATELY about it?
  - c) Make amends QUICKLY if appropriate?
  - d) RESOLUTELY turn my thoughts to helping someone else?

**Step 11 Reflection Questions**

After prayerful consideration, write out the answers to the following questions:

- 1) Have I established a conscious contact with God? Do I really want one? Do I believe it is even possible for me?
- 2) Am I committed to improving my conscious contact with God?
- 3) Have I developed my own prayer practice?
- 4) Each day, how much time do I consistently dedicate to prayer and meditation:
  - a) Morning?
  - b) Evening?
  - c) During the day?

Do I believe prayer and meditation are as vital to the health of my spiritual life as air and breathing are to my physical life?

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**Commitment**

One may be quite far along on the path, but if one meets a beginner who sincerely seeks guidance, then one should help without reservation. If such a beginner were to come to you, what would you say? This is what I said to someone today:

"The time of beginning is one of the most precious times of all. It can be very exciting and full of wonderful growth. The first thing to do is to make up your mind that you are going to go the distance.

"When I first began, I made a lifelong commitment. I determined that I would learn from my teacher for at least seven years. Now, it has been much longer than that, but the essential element is still the same: commitment.

"But commitment needs something else in order to be perpetuated. It needs discipline. This is the perseverance to keep on when things are tough. Adversity is life's way of testing and perfecting a person. Without that, we would never develop character.

"Rice suffers when it is milled. Jade must suffer when it is polished. But what emerges is something special. If you want to be special too, then you have to be able to stick to things even when they are difficult."

"Commitment and disciple -- these are two of the most precious words for those who would seek [a spiritual path]."

--Deng Ming-Dao, 365 Tao: Daily Meditations

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### **Knowledge vs. Understanding**

Understanding is like water flowing in a stream. Wisdom and knowledge are solid and can block our understanding. In Buddhism knowledge is regarded as an obstacle for understanding. If we take something to be the truth, we may cling to it so much that even if the truth comes and knocks at our door, we won't want to let it in. We have to be able to transcend our previous knowledge the way we climb up a ladder. If we are on the fifth rung and think that we are very high, there is no hope for us to step up to the sixth. We must learn to transcend our own views. Understanding, like water, can flow, can penetrate. Views, knowledge, and even wisdom are solid, and can block the way of understanding.

--Thich Nhat Hanh, The Heart of Understanding

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### **Open Mind**

"When we hear [spiritual teachings] or study [spiritual principles], our only job is to remain open. Usually when we hear or read something new, we just compare it to our own ideas. If it is the same, we accept it and say that it is correct. If it is not, we say it is incorrect. In either case, we learn nothing. If we read or listen with an open mind and an open heart, the rain of the Dharma will penetrate the soil of our consciousness. While reading or listening, don't work too hard. Be like the earth. When rain comes, the earth only has to open herself up to the rain. Allow the rain of the Dharma to come in and penetrate the seeds that are buried deep in your consciousness. A teacher cannot give you the truth. The truth is already in you. You only need to open yourself -- body, mind, and heart -- so that his or her teachings will penetrate your own seed of understanding and enlightenment. If you let the words enter you, the soil and the seeds will do the rest of the work."

--Thich Nhat Hanh, from "The Heart of Buddha's Teaching"

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### **Going nowhere... FAST!**

"There is a story in Zen circles about a man and a horse. The horse is galloping quickly, and it appears that the man on the horse is going somewhere important. Another man, standing alongside the road, shouts, "Where are you going?" and the first man replies, "I don't know! Ask the horse!" This is also our story. We are riding a horse, we don't know where we are going, and we can't stop. The horse is our habit energy pulling us along, and we are powerless."

--Thich Nhat Hanh, from "The Heart of the Buddha's Teachings"

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### **Addicted**

"The ego is addicted. Within this part of my mind, I believe I am alone, so naturally the craving to unite with something else is enormous. The mistake I made was uniting with a harmful substance that had nothing to give. However, if I remain in my separate self after giving up the substance, my addictions merely shift. The reason that transformations were so quick in the early days of Alcoholics Anonymous is that the "members" were clear that the aim of the program was to move from the mind that serves itself to the mind that serves others. The mind that serves others cannot be addicted. But if my focus is on strengthening and defining the separate self, I will never know the joy of the mind that serves."

--Hugh Prather, from "Spiritual Notes to Myself"

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### **The Ultimate Dance**

"Truth cannot be defined, although it can certainly be experienced. But experience is not a definition. A definition is made by the mind, experience comes through participating. If somebody asks, "What is a dance?" how can you define it? But you can dance and you can know the inner feel of it. God is the ultimate dance." --Osho

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### **Breathing in Love**

"Love is always new. It never becomes old because it is non-accumulative, non-hoarding. It knows no past; it is always fresh, as fresh as the dewdrops. It lives moment to moment, it is atomic. It has no continuity, it knows no tradition. Each moment it dies and each moment it is born again. It is like breath: you breathe in, you breathe out; again you breathe in and you breathe out. You don't hoard it inside. If you hoard the breath you will die because it will become stale, it will become dead. It will lose that vitality, the quality of life. So is the case with love - it is breathing; each moment it renews itself. So whenever one gets stuck in love and stops breathing, life loses all significance. And that's what is happening to people: the mind is so dominant that it even influences the heart and makes even the heart possessive! The heart knows no possessiveness but the mind contaminates it, poisons it. So remember that: be in love with existence! And let love be like breathing. Breathe in, breathe out, but let it be love coming in, going out. By and by with each breath you have to create that magic of love. Make it a meditation: when you breathe out, just feel that you are pouring your love into existence; when you breathe in, existence is pouring its love into you. And soon you will see that the quality of your breath is changing, then it starts becoming something totally different to what you have ever known before. That's why in India we call it "prana", life, not just breathing, it is not just oxygen. Something else is there, the very life itself." --Osho

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### **Slipping out of Mind**

"Meditation is not a solution of any problem in particular; it solves nothing. It simply helps you to get rid of the mind, the problem-creator. It simply helps you to slip out of the mind as a snake slips out of the old skin. Once you know you are not the mind the great transcendence has happened. Suddenly all problems become insignificant; slowly, slowly they evaporate. You are left with a profound peace; a great silence prevails. This silence is the solution. This peace is the answer, the answer of all answers." --Osho

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### **Stop, Drop & Roll**

A friend laughed today when I told her the Big Book's 10th & 11th Step tools of:

**PAUSE, ASK, & TURN** are a lot like when your body is caught on fire and we're instructed to: **STOP, DROP, & ROLL**

PAUSE when agitated or doubtful. (p. 87, Step 11)

ASK for the right thought or action (ask for the truth). (p. 84 & 87, Steps 10 & 11)

TURN to someone you can be helpful to. (p. 84, Step 10)

vs.

STOP the fear (which causes agitation and doubt) from driving (ego) you.

DROP the SOB's ("States Of Being"; who I think I am, but really am not) which wear the many masks of fear.

ROLL away from the "selves" which burn me and toward someone I can help who's also "up in the flames".

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### **"Enter the Silence Often", A White Eagle Meditation**

"Dear Ones, enter the Silence often. Be still at least for a short time each morning and night. Surely God is worthy of a little attention in your busy life? Whenever you can, withdraw from the crowd and seek contact with that divine life, which you will recognize in yourself as a vibration or feeling of peace, of love, and of great light. You can carry that light in your heart as you go amid the crowds. "In your meditation, think often of the beauty of God, the love of God; and as you do so you will begin to feel in your heart a pulsation of love, divine peace, and kindness towards the whole world, and see God manifesting in all life, in all form. Those who thus 'practice the Presence of God' can enter a crowd, or a room full of people, and consciously or unconsciously they are radiating light, they are projecting the light of the divine spirit. This is the healing light, the light of the world. Christ through Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world.' I AM. The Christ in you is the light of your world and the light of mankind. "Seek the will of God, and not self-will... God into the silence; seek there, and then when you have found it, let it manifest in your own lives. Put aside all temptation to harbor unkind or critical thoughts. In their place let there be consideration and thoughtfulness, remembering the difficulties that all, including yourselves, have to encounter. This is the law of Christ, and this is what Christ did through Jesus of Nazareth. Go ye and do likewise and you will have nothing to fear. Instead you will unfurl your wings and rise into the world of great joy and peace.

--White Eagle (in the Fall 2001 White Eagle Newsletter for the Americas: On Eagle's Wings)

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### **Native American Code of Ethics**

Rise with the sun to pray. Pray alone. Pray often. The Great Spirit will listen, if you only speak. Be tolerant of those who are lost on their path. Ignorance, conceit, anger, jealousy and greed stem from a lost soul. Pray that they will find guidance. Search for yourself, by yourself. Do not allow others to make your path for you. It is your road, and yours alone. Others may walk it with you, but no one can walk it for you. Treat the guests in your home with much consideration. Serve them the best food, give them the best bed and treat them with respect and honor. Do not take what is not yours whether from a person, a community, the wilderness or from a culture. It was not earned nor given. It is not yours. Respect all things that are placed upon this earth -- whether it be people or plant. Honor other people's thoughts, wishes and words. Never interrupt another or mock or rudely mimic them. Allow each person the right to personal expression. Never speak of others in a bad way. The negative energy that you put out into the universe will multiply when it returns to you. All persons make mistakes. And all mistakes can be forgiven. Bad thoughts cause illness of the mind, body and spirit. Practice optimism. Nature is not FOR us, it is a PART of us. They are part of your worldly family. Children are the seeds of our future. Plant love in their hearts and water them with wisdom and life's lessons. When they are grown, give them space to grow. Avoid hurting the hearts of others. The poison of your pain will return to you. Be truthful at all times. Honesty is the test of ones will within this universe. Keep yourself balanced. Your Mental self, Spiritual self, Emotional self, and Physical self -- all need to be strong, pure and healthy. Work out the body to strengthen the mind. Grow rich in spirit to cure emotional ails. Make conscious decisions as to who you will be and how you will react. Be responsible for your own actions. Respect the privacy and personal space of others. Do not touch the personal property of others -- especially sacred and religious objects. This is forbidden. Be true to yourself first. You cannot nurture and help others if you cannot nurture and help yourself first. Respect others religious beliefs. Do not force your belief on others.

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### **Step Eleven & Emotional Sobriety**

The alcoholic is childish, emotionally sensitive and grandiose. We are in full flight from reality, maladjusted to life and mentally defective. We have trouble with personal relationships. We can't control our emotional natures. We are prey to misery and depression. We can't make a living. We have a feeling of uselessness. We are unhappy. We are driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self seeking, self-pity, pride, anger, greed, gluttony, envy, lust and sloth. we are guaranteed to arouse jealousy, suspicion and bitterness because we are selfish, dishonest and inconsiderate of others.

This is an accurate description of the alcoholic gleaned from the Big Book and the 12 & 12. In short, we are a mess when we show up to AA. This makes the Eleventh Step Promises that much more astounding.

"We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity or foolish decisions.. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves."

This phenomenal change in our lives comes as a result of the disciplines of prayer and meditation. Bill Wilson further expounds on the benefits of Step Eleven in his writing on emotional sobriety. The following attributes are exhibited by the practitioners of prayer and meditation.

1. They are comfortable about themselves.
2. They are not bowled over by their own emotions.
3. They take life's disappointments in stride.
4. They have a tolerant, easy going towards themselves and others.
5. They can laugh at themselves.
6. They neither underestimate or overestimate their abilities.
7. They can accept their shortcomings.
8. They have self-respect.
9. They feel able to deal with most situations that come their way.
10. They get satisfaction from the simple everyday pleasures.
11. They feel right about other people.
12. They are able to give love, consider the interest of other people and accept love.
13. They have intimate, emotional relationships that are satisfying and lasting.
14. They expect to trust and like others and take it for granted that others will trust and

like them.

15. They respect the many differences they find in people.
16. They do not push people around, nor do they allow themselves to be pushed around.
17. They can feel they are part of a group.
18. They feel a sense of responsibility to their neighbor and to their fellow human beings.
19. They are able to meet the demands of life.
20. They are able to do something about their problems as they arise.
21. They accept responsibility for who they are and what they do.
22. They learn from the past. Live in the present and look to the future with hope.
23. They are objective enough about life to find humor in every difficult situation.
24. They welcome new ideas and experiences.
25. They make use of their natural capabilities.
26. They set realistic goals for themselves.
27. They put their best in what they do and get satisfaction out of doing.

Lofty goals, but they do manifest in our lives when we follow the disciplines of Step Eleven. "It works. It really does." .....luv ya....jerryo

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#### STEP 10

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

*I do Step 10 quite often. Sometimes I think I do it too often. I feel low if I make a mistake. I never used to admit I was wrong. The people around me don't do it. Why should I? I guess I do it now because I do it for me - I need to do it.*

#### QUESTIONS

1. Do I believe it is useful to have a system or a format to review my thoughts, feelings and behaviors on a daily basis?
2. Do I prefer to take this inventory at a regular time each day or do I just let these inventory times happen naturally when the need arises?
3. When taking this inventory is it more beneficial for me to use a list of strengths as well as weaknesses?
4. When was the last time I caught myself doing or saying something I did not feel good about?
5. How did I feel? What did I do about it?  
Was it easy to follow my inner voice? Did it take long?
6. If I am in the habit of admitting my wrongs, do I still find it difficult or is it getting easier?  
Do I find I need not do this as often as before?
7. Do I check on fear, anger and resentment as they arise in my life?  
Do I still put myself down for negative feelings and behaviors?
8. Remember G. R. A. S. P! (I might want to check Guilt - Resentment - Anger and Self Pity as I strive to accept myself, others and God to-day.)

#### STEP 11

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

*I needed a Higher Power. I thought you had to be perfect to go to God - I eventually got a new God - A loving God. This loving God was always there for me, I found it difficult to believe God could love me - I now want to keep in touch with this loving God. God loves me no matter what.*

#### QUESTIONS

1. Do you pray?  
How do you pray?  
When do you pray?  
Where do you pray?



2. Do you meditate?  
Do you use meditation books?  
Which are your favorites?  
Do you listen to tapes?
3. What is prayer and meditation for you?
4. What is your favorite prayer? Why?
5. Is silence a part of your prayer and meditation?
6. Does it bother you to have the word God mentioned in Step 3 and Step 11?
7. What do you understand by the words "Conscious contact"?  
"God's will"?  
"Power to carry that out"?
8. Would it be useful for you to take a break when you are hurting or stressed out to find a place, be quiet, breathe deeply, let go of what troubles you and ask God for healing, peace and serenity?

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#### Day 1 of 2 (Lesson 79) - LET ME RECOGNIZE THE PROBLEM SO IT CAN BE SOLVED.

A problem cannot be solved if you do not know what it is. Even if it is really solved already you will still have the problem, because you will not recognize that it has been solved. This is the situation of the world. The problem of separation, which is really the only problem, has already been solved. Yet the solution is not recognized because the problem is not recognized.

Everyone in this world seems to have his own special problems. Yet they are all the same, and must be recognized as one if the one solution that solves them all is to be accepted. Who can see that a problem has been solved if he thinks the problem is something else? Even if he is given the answer, he cannot see its relevance.

That is the position in which you find yourself now. You have the answer, but you are still uncertain about what the problem is. A long series of different problems seems to confront you, and as one is settled the next one and the next arise. There seems to be no end to them. There is no time in which you feel completely free of problems and at peace.

The temptation to regard problems as many is the temptation to keep the problem of separation unsolved. The world seems to present you with a vast number of problems, each requiring a different answer. This perception places you in a position in which your problem solving must be inadequate, and failure is inevitable.

No one could solve all the problems the world appears to hold. They seem to be on so many levels, in such varying forms and with such varied content, that they confront you with an impossible situation. Dismay and depression are inevitable as you regard them. Some spring up unexpectedly, just as you think you have resolved the previous ones. Others remain unsolved under a cloud of denial, and rise to haunt you from time to time, only to be hidden again but still unsolved.

All this complexity is but a desperate attempt not to recognize the problem, and therefore not to let it be resolved. If you could recognize that your only problem is separation, no matter what form it takes, you could accept the answer because you would see its relevance. Perceiving the underlying constancy in all the problems that seem to confront you, you would understand that you have the means to solve them all. And you would use the means, because you recognize the problem.

In our longer practice periods today (5 to 10 minutes) we will ask what the problem is, and what is the answer to it. We will not assume that we already know. We will try to free our minds of all the many different kinds of problems we think we have. We will try to realize that we have only one problem, which we have failed to recognize. We will ask what it is, and wait for the answer. We will be told. Then we will ask for the solution to it. And we will be told.

The exercises for today will be successful to the extent to which you do not insist on defining the problem. Perhaps you will not succeed in letting all your preconceived notions go, but that is not necessary. All that is necessary is to entertain some doubt about the reality of your version of what your problems are. You are trying to recognize that you have been given the answer by recognizing the problem, so that the problem and the answer can be brought together and you can be at peace.

The shorter practice periods for today (about a minute) will not be set by time, but by need. You will see many problems today, each one calling for an answer. Our efforts will be directed toward recognizing that there is only one problem and one answer. In this recognition are all problems resolved. In this recognition there is peace.

Be not deceived by the form of problems today. Whenever any difficulty seems to rise, tell yourself quickly:

Let me recognize this problem so it can be solved.

Then try to suspend all judgment about what the problem is. If possible, close your eyes for about a minute and ask what it is. You will be heard and you will be answered.

#### Day 2 of 2 (Lesson 80) - LET ME RECOGNIZE MY PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN SOLVED.

If you are willing to recognize your problems, you will recognize that you have no problems. Your one central problem has been answered, and you have no other. Therefore, you must be at peace. Salvation thus depends on recognizing this one problem, and understanding that it has been solved. One problem, one solution. Salvation is accomplished. Freedom from conflict has been given you. Accept that fact, and you are ready to take your rightful place in God's plan for salvation.

Your only problem has been solved! Repeat this over and over to yourself today, with gratitude and conviction. You have recognized your only problem, opening the way for the Holy Spirit to give you God's answer. You have laid deception aside, and seen the light of truth. You have accepted salvation for yourself by bringing the problem to the answer. And you can recognize the answer, because the problem has been identified.

You are entitled to peace today. A problem that has been resolved cannot trouble you. Only be certain you do not forget that all problems are the same. Their many forms will not deceive you while you remember this. One problem, one solution. Accept the peace this simple statement brings.

In our longer practice periods today (5 to 10 minutes), we will claim the peace that must be ours when the problem and the answer have been brought together. The problem must be gone, because God's answer cannot fail. Having recognized one, you have recognized the other. The solution is inherent in the problem. You are answered, and have accepted the answer. You are saved.

Now let the peace that your acceptance brings be given you. Close your eyes, and receive your reward.

Recognize that your problems have been solved. Recognize that you are out of conflict; free and at peace.

Above all, remember that you have one problem, and that the problem has one solution. It is in this that the simplicity of salvation lies. It is because of this that it is guaranteed to work.

Assure yourself often today that your problems have been solved. Repeat the idea with deep conviction, as frequently as possible. And be particularly sure to apply the idea for today to any specific problem that may arise. Say quickly:

Let me recognize this problem has been solved.

Let us be determined not to collect grievances today (a grievance is defined as, "a real or imagined reason for complaint"). Let us be determined to be free of problems that do not exist. The means is simple honesty. Do not deceive yourself about what the problem is, and you must recognize it has been solved.

#### A Course In Miracles

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

Have you ever considered – and I am sure most of you have – that we learned the tools for the first four parts of Step 10 when we did the “on the job training” of Steps 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9? These procedural “tools” may have taken hours (Step 9 months) to learn, but we learn to put them into action in Step 10 in a few seconds. The happy results may be immediate!

- 1) Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. (Learned in Step Four)
- 2) When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them. (Learned in Step Six & Seven)
- 3) We discuss them with someone immediately. (Learned in Step Five)
- 4) and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone. (Learned in Steps Eight & Nine)

Please notice how they are staggered out of order, e.g.: 4, 6&7, 5, 8&9...but how convenient this is! First we can discover our defects, next we ask God to remove them (and if He does, we don't have to drive our sponsor crazy by phoning him/her unnecessarily every time something goes wrong). But if it is really important we then call our sponsor or someone in our recovery support network who may direct us or have us make proper amends and remind us to turn our thoughts to others who can be helped and to cease fighting anything or anyone.

Remember the chart:

Steps 1 & 2: Considering the proposition, "I can't, but God can."

Steps 3 thru 9: Learning by "on the job training."

Steps 10, 11 & 12: AA life begins by putting into action what we have learned.

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Jeff Greenwald - "All happy families are alike," wrote Leo Tolstoy, "but every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Conversely: All unhappy meditation sittings are alike, but every happy meditation sitting is different in its own way.

Unhappy sittings are always about the same thing: collapse into the trap of identification, clinging, wishing for things to be different from the way they are. But all productive sittings reveal new facets of the breath, or the sounds outside the window. Each opens a new avenue for insight. Every one of my "good" sittings has been transformative, highlighting a different aspect of my awareness. Every unhappy sitting is about "dukkha", suffering – and dukkha is about closing down.

\*

Heavenly Father, let me always look for the big picture while You do the judging. Amen.

\*

The AA Mantra -

Big Book Step 10:

How can I best serve Thee - Thy will (not mine) be done.

Big Book Step 11:

...humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy will be done."

AA 12 & 12 Step 10:

When in doubt we can always pause, saying, "Not my will, but Thine, be done."

AA 12 & 12 Step 11:

...when making specific requests, it will be well to add to each one of them this qualification: "...if it be Thy will."

As the day goes on, we can pause where situations must be met and decisions made, and renew the simple request: "Thy will, not mine, be done."

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I pray that I am never satisfied with my spiritual condition.

\*

Life's Terms Prayer (Stephen. K.): Dear God, please help me to accept the way things are, and to look for the good in any situation I face in life.

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What prayers have you been most attracted to? Write a short article about each explaining what they mean to you & why these prayers touch you.

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"Eleventh Step Meditation: An Ever-Deeper Understanding" a book by Laurence S., go to the website & read this book at <http://www.5thword.com>

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THE PRACTICE OF COMPASSION, Trungpa Rinpoche - City Retreat, Berkeley Shambhala Center, June 18, 2001

## STEP ONE

I'd like you to start with where you already feel compassion. Currently I feel that's the most effective place to start, where you already feel it. I always mention that when Trungpa Rinpoche was teaching about compassion, he would awaken the feeling of compassion, ignite it or awaken it by thinking it of an experience he had when he was a very young boy in Tibet. He looked down from the top of the monastery and saw people stoning a puppy to death, and he couldn't do anything because he was too far away. He said what made the image all the more painful is that they were laughing and having fun doing this. All he had to do was think of that, and then the feeling of the bodhichitta began to flow.

That's where we would start this practice, with what is a second step on the sheet. But we'll start with that as the beginning. You would think of someone in this category. Then you would wish that they could be free of suffering and the root of suffering. Now this is very interesting. Suppose, for instance, I find that when I do this for the animals in the laboratories, it's very straightforward. I just want them to not be in

those experiments. I just want them to be out of there. It's completely practical. That might be the situation with what you've been thinking of as well.

Sometimes, though, more frequently as I go through my life, it's psychologically a little more complicated. People often say to me, for instance, when they wish for themselves or a loved one to be free of suffering and the root of suffering, and then they say, I don't know if I really mean that. Then they say, I understand the logic of this. You say, "I learn so much from suffering, I'm not sure I really want myself to be free of this particular anxiety I'm feeling now because I'm out of work, or whatever it might be, because I learn so much from it."

I think it's very helpful, when you're doing this practice for yourself and for others as you move through the list. It might be very straightforward, like the laboratory animals. You just want them out of that situation, and so you know what you wish for them. But at some level we're always talking about the root of the suffering. It's often at the level of psychological distress. For instance, if someone is dying or someone is very ill and I think of them and I wish them to be free of suffering and the root of suffering. Part of that is not wanting them to be in physical pain.

### SPINOFF

Actually the more I do this over the years, I really want them to be free of fear, fear of the pain, fear of all the spinoff from the illness. I want them to be free and I want myself to be free of all this spinoff. Do you know what I mean by spinoff? It's like we're ill or our house has burned down, we've just lost all our possessions or we've lost a loved one or so forth. And if we stay with the raw material, we will find the bodhichitta in there. We'll find the soft spot, the tenderness in there. The open space is in there. However, I wish for myself and all of us to be free of all the resentment and the anger and the terror going on and on and on that we do around everything that happens to ourselves.

Somehow the root of suffering is how we escalate the suffering, how we make the suffering more intense by going on and on and on about it with our habitual reactivity. In some sense, not to get too complicated or psychological, but often what we're wishing for people is that they be free of their fear of what's happening to them, or their depression about what's happening to them, or their bitterness and anger about what's happening to them. You see what I'm saying? Because sometimes what's happening to them, we actually can't, it can't be changed. We might wish that it could be changed, but we're not trying to do this practice to get into kind of wishful thinking or, like, if we just aspire enough that everything is going to be all right. Because in life there's so much not everything being alright, you know. So somehow it's more like . . .

There's this old adage that it isn't so much what happens to us, but how we react to what happens to us, that we're working with with a spiritual path. When we wish for people to be free of suffering and the root of suffering, at some level we're wishing them to be free of all the spinoff. I don't know how else to say it. Sometimes I call it fabrication or escalating it. Trungpa Rinpoche in this talk that I've often mentioned called "Working with Negativity," it's a chapter in *The Myth of Freedom* by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, talks about that there's nothing wrong with negativity, but our problem is negative negativity. By which he means, there's nothing wrong with the essential arising of any emotion or life situation, for that matter. But where it gets problematic is what we make of that, how we make matters worse with how we work with our mind: resentment, bitterness, blame, and on and on.

Wishing to be free of that kind of really self-imposed loneliness, self-imposed suffering that we create with our minds. The fact that our house burns down is not self-imposed. The fact that we get an illness isn't self-imposed. What we do with that and how that escalates into such intense misery and feeling of separateness and feeling of aloneness and alienation. This, we do this with our minds. We do it to ourselves. We torture ourselves.

So we begin with where it's already flowing. That's step one. And we say, "May this one be free of suffering and the root of suffering."

### STEP TWO

In step two, we do it for ourselves and we say, "May I be free of suffering and the root of suffering."

This is an interesting one, because ideally you just zero in on a place where you're really stuck and where you are driving yourself crazy or where there's a real suffering in your life. And you wish for yourself to be free particularly of making matters worse, this spinoff.

Sometimes you can't find anything. This is rare, of course (laughter). If that's the case, Ken McLeod [see *Wake Up to Your Life*] actually suggests that you think of yourself having a great loss or having an illness,

and then wish yourself to be free of that suffering. Personally, I think it's most powerful to really connect with something that's already there and notice the effects of wishing yourself to be free of that particular suffering and the root of suffering.

### ROOT OF SUFFERING

Maybe at this point you don't have a clear idea of what the root of suffering is, and I'll talk more about that. But let's just say, for the purpose of doing this practice this week, think of the root of suffering as this tendency to make matters worse, this tendency to buy into the same old story lines and the same old blaming and the same old resentment mind, bitter mind, judgmental mind, self-pitying mind, whatever it might be. The tendency to make matters worse being the root of suffering. Because, as I say, even if what your suffering is is that you have a genuine great loss, the root of it turning into debilitating suffering is what we do with that, how we spin off from that. Am I making this clear?

### STEP THREE

The third step would be to awaken compassion for a friend. As I said on Saturday, a close friend or family member, so choose one that actually is suffering in some way, has pain of some kind, and turn your attention to them and wish for them to be free of suffering and the root of suffering. If you get into this place of "I'm not sure I really want them to be free of this because it causes it to grow" and stuff, then go deeper. At the level of their depression or their rage or their self-denigration, we would all want for our close friends and relatives to be free of that kind of spinoff.

Try to make it as real as possible and sending compassion by connecting again with the original feeling of compassion, and then directing it toward this individual, and encouraging it by saying the words. And they'll either be a natural feeling there that you might classically call compassion, but some sense of really feeling for them and really wishing, aspiring, longing for them to be free of suffering and the root of suffering. And there's a sense of being there with them at the level of mind training.

Also notice the effect because it may be any kind of feeling of blocking it. Remember what I said. The bodhichitta is there in that feeling of blocking or "I can't do it" or whatever it might be. The bodhichitta is there if you go into it and experience underneath the words. This is our practice.

### STEP FOUR

Then we move on to neutral people. Since we don't know that much about them, I find that when I get to the neutrals that I actually do make up stories about them (laughter), because I don't actually know, although we might think we know. And for the purposes of doing the practice, that's okay.

For instance, the neutrals are just people we don't know, say, in this room or on the streets, who aren't particularly looking like they're suffering terribly. But we turn our attention to them and we say, "May this one be free of suffering and the root of suffering," in terms of making worse for themselves. And we might think, you know, if they've had a loss or someone dear to them is ill or if there's been a catastrophe in their life of some kind, natural catastrophe, the house burning or if there's been a theft or there's anything that would cause suffering, may they be free of the root of suffering, of escalating around this issue. Just wishing, however this happens for you, wishing for them to be free of suffering and the root of suffering. Then again, notice the effect. That's an important part of the practice.

If it's a free-flowing feeling of compassion, usually you just experience that. Keep saying the words and even saying more words if you want to kind of bring it out more. They often say it's like sunshine on a flower, causing the feeling of compassion to grow and flourish, causing the bodhichitta to flourish and expand.

If you feel blocked, just going into that and finding the bodhichitta there, it may not feel like bodhichitta to you. It may feel like hell to you. I'm telling you, even if you don't experience it as such, just a few seconds of feeling of closedness is very, very powerful. Pointing you in a revolutionary direction, very unpredictable direction, a very extraordinary and transformative direction.

### STEP FIVE

Then you do it for the difficult ones. You think of the difficult person or people and you wish for them to be free of suffering and the root of suffering. Now, a very interesting thing often happens here. You can really get into wishing them to be free of suffering, because you think if they could be free . . . basically you want them to be the way you want them to be, you know (laughter). Could they be free of their lousy

personality so that I could feel better? (Laughter) This you might call not quite compassion. It's more like justifying your dislike of them by using a compassion practice.

And the other thing is, of course, being glad that they're suffering (laughter). Hard to face, but true. When we really dislike people, maybe we're well aware- or maybe we'll get more in touch with it by doing this practice- but there's a lot of rejoicing, almost, about their misfortune. Because basically they hurt you and you want them to suffer too. So you're glad when you hear that things aren't going well for them. And you feel pretty unhappy when you hear that everything is fine for them. Those kinds of feelings come up about people that we find difficult. So, rather than feeling bad about that just notice that that's what happening. Have a sense of humor. Whatever it is, let the words go and notice the effect.

Sometimes with difficult people, I find it is also quite helpful to actually imagine different scenarios for them. I have actually cooked up some real genuine compassion for some of the very difficult people in my life by beginning to think of, for instance, something happening to one of their children or something that I know that, if that degree of misfortune happened to them, I wouldn't be glad, that I would really feel compassion for them. So you can use your imagination here if it helps you to feel some kind of compassion for someone who your heart is shut to, a difficult person.

In other words, you find the person or people and you encourage this feeling by saying the words, "May they be free of suffering and the root of suffering." And then you notice the effect. Then you expand the whole thing by moving onto the next stage. So we keep expanding it in this way, and just notice what happens.

#### STEP SIX

The sixth step is to have all five there together: yourself, and in my case a laboratory animal, and myself, a close friend or close family member, and a neutral person or people, and a difficult person or people, all together. And see if you can have a sense of sending the compassion to all five. May all of us, this little group, circle that we've become, may all of us be free of suffering and the root of suffering.

Sometimes people like to go one by one and just look at each one, or whatever. And again, it goes through the same process of contacting the original feel and encouraging it by saying the words as you direct it towards these.

#### STEP SEVEN

Then you extend it out to all beings.

This is the seven-step practice. I would like you to do that at least twice during the week, because it takes quite a while. And you would sit for a period of time and then you would do this seven-step practice and then you would sit a little bit at the end. And so to do it twice. If once is all that's possible, okay. But at least once. Twice would be better and, of course, more would be better if you have the time.

There are alternate ways you can do it. You can simplify it in any form. But one of the ways its simplified is four steps, where you start where you already feel compassion, then you do it for yourself. So I would say, "May the laboratory animal be free of suffering and the root of suffering," and then, "May I be free of suffering and the root of suffering." And "May you be free of suffering," and you can be anyone you want it to be.

Then "May all beings be free of suffering and the root of suffering." So those four steps. And then the simplest of all, three steps, is "May I be free of suffering, May you be free of suffering, May all beings be free of suffering."

Each day do this practice, but you can do it in any kind of modified form. You can skip any of the seven steps. People often like to skip the five-together step. But you do whatever you want. That will be your homework for this week.

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#### A Fellowship Prayer

Dear Higher Power I am grateful that: I am part of the Fellowship, one among many, but I am one. I need to work the Steps for the development of the buried life within me. Our Program may be human in its organization, but it is Divine in its purpose. The purpose is to continue my spiritual awakening. Participating in the privileges of the movement, I shall share in the responsibilities, taking it upon myself to carry my fair share of the load, not grudgingly, but joyfully. To the extent that I fail in my responsibilities, the Program fails. To the extent that I succeed, the Program succeeds. I shall not wait to be drafted for service to my fellow members, I shall volunteer. I shall be loyal in my attendance, generous in my giving,

kind in my criticism, intuitive in my suggestions, loving in my attitudes. I shall give to the Program my interest, my enthusiasm, my devotion, and, most of all, myself.

\*

St. Francis - God, my efforts to make myself happy have yielded much unhappiness. My anxiety about my tomorrows steals the pleasure of my todays. My anger toward my neighbor strangles my Heart. Please release me from my preoccupation with myself and my troubles and begin awakening me to Your indescribable Joy. Amen.

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The Dalai Lama said, "My religion is kindness."  
You can not give that which you do not have for yourself.

A group spent days visiting with the Dalai Lama focusing upon what they believe the five most important questions to be considered moving into the new millennium.

The five questions were:

1. How do we address the widening gap between rich and poor?
2. How do we protect the earth?
3. How do we educate our children?
4. How do we help Tibet and other oppressed countries and peoples of the world?
5. How do we bring spirituality (deep caring for one another) through all disciplines of life?

The Dalai Lama said all five questions fall under the last one. If we have true compassion in our hearts, our children will be educated wisely, we will care for the earth, those who "have not" will be cared for.

The group asked the Dalai Lama, "Do you think loving on the planet is increasing or staying the same?"  
His response: "My experience leads me to believe that love IS increasing."

He shared a simple practice that will increase loving and compassion in the world.

He asked everyone in the group to share this practice with as many people as they can:

1. Spend 5 minutes at the beginning of each day remembering we all want the same things (to be happy and be loved) and we are all connected to one another.
2. Spend 5 minutes -- breathing in - cherishing yourself; and, breathing out - cherishing others. If you think about people you have difficulty cherishing, extend your cherishing to them anyway.
3. During the day extend that attitude to everyone you meet. Practice cherishing the simplest person (clerks, attendants, etc., as well as the "important" people in your life; cherish the people you love and the people you dislike).
4. Continue this practice no matter what happens or what anyone does to you.

These thoughts are very simple, inspiring and helpful. The practice of cherishing can be taken very deep if done wordlessly, allowing yourself to feel the love and appreciation that already exists in your heart.

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Benjamin Franklin - Morning Question: What good shall I do this day? Evening Question: What good have I done today?

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Clancy I. from Venice CA has probably worked with more alcoholics than any other person in AA today. In 1991 he was recorded doing a 12 Step Study weekend in Canada & he shared a 4th Step inventory that he sometimes uses. I am not promoting this 4th Step (I've only ever recommended using the AA Big Book's clear-cut directions) nor am I suggesting that it should be considered to be an AA 4th Step. I am merely sharing a alternative technique that someone uses. Also, it has been used as a tool for yearly inventory. He asks his sponsees to answer these seven questions:

- 1) In looking back over your life, what memories are still painful, are still guilt ridden, are still "dirty"?
- 2) In what ways today do you feel inadequate as a person?
- 3) Who do you resent and why? Be as specific and nasty as you can.
- 4) What do you conceive to be the ongoing and/or recurring problems in your human relationships?

- 5) What do you consider to be your defects of character as you see them?
- 6) What would say today are your goals in life, whether realistic or not?
- 7) How do you think AA can in any way possibly help you in a start toward any of these goals?

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Eckhart Tolle - There's a beautiful lesson in "A Course In Miracles" that says, "I'm never upset for the reason I think." So that of course means, to be upset is part of the structure of the egoic mind – you're not in touch with the depth of who you are (the essence of your being), you're not in touch with the depth of this moment (which is inseparable from the depth of who you are), and that's why you're upset. The situation isn't really that important, and you see the real reason why you are upset is you've lost touch with yourself. Or another way of putting it, you've lost touch with the present moment, you're not fully aligned internally with what is now. Not being aligned internally with whatever form this moment takes means not being in touch with life, because at this moment life is taking this form (it's not going to last, forms never last), but at this moment life is taking this form. To be aligned with a deeper life that is BEYOND form, you need to be first of all aligned with the form that life takes instead of rejecting the form and saying, "I'm looking for the REAL life, but not this." So to be aligned with who you are is the ONLY thing that can free you from the state of being unhappy. Work with bringing a particular alertness, a particular attention to whatever arises (outside or inside), notice your reactions, see if you can be in a state of IMMEDIATE oneness with the form that life takes at this moment, immediate inner oneness. The present moment is primary.

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