

Let yourself really hear, really feel, really see.  
Let yourself be a human being...  
Only when you are real with yourself  
Can you find the right path in life...  
Tom Luian (1988)

### The Recovery Medicine Wheel

The term “medicine” as it is used in the term Medicine Wheel refers to a healing, a teaching, an enlightening, ... spiritual energy. A Medicine Wheel can best be described as a mirror within which everything is reflected...

The Medicine Wheel encompasses the Four Directions, Four Winds, Four Grandfathers, Four Elements (earth, fire, air, water), four races of people in the human family (Black, White, Red & Yellow). We the people have four aspects to our nature, four major realms of human existence.

North — the physical realm

East — the realm of knowledge & enlightenment

South — the spiritual realm

West — the realm of introspective thought

### Walking the Steps

Walking the steps of the recovery medicine wheel means choosing a starting point & continuing in a sun wise direction & back to your beginning place.

A circle has no true beginning nor ending point, so when you have traveled through the wheel back to where you have started; you are ready to begin again... with new understanding. This is a life long quest...

This Medicine Wheel concept is ancient, passed through the generations. It is a spiritual, emotional, psychological & physical improvement model. To be used by & for those who seek inner peace, spiritual strength & a healthier mind & body. It is a powerful tool with which a person can utilize to maintain sobriety & sustain recovery. It is especially beneficial to ACOA, Codependents & people with addictions.

Think of the steps as you would the paddle of a canoe. The paddle has great potential for moving you along a river. But it is up to you to put the paddle in the water, push forward & adjust to the current. In the same way, the steps of the Recovery Medicine Wheel will have great potential for moving you along the “River of Life” to recovery. BUT, you must apply them sincerely!

### North

#### Physical Realm

The north is the place of beginning because it the place of rebirth. You must make a decision in your life to stop physically abusing your body.

Beginning today... I will take good care of myself.

If you are abusing; drugs, alcohol or food, you must start by recognizing the damage you are doing to your body. You must take aggressive steps to get treatment for your addiction.

Beginning today I will regain a balance in my life; by developing an understanding of the important connection between the physical, emotional, psychological & spiritual parts of my existence.

This means you will begin to see the entire picture of your life. In so doing... come to understand that the physical well being involves the need to become enlightened. It also means to become aware of the important connection between; emotions, life stress, sense of self & the effect these life elements have on your physical health.

Beginning today I will stop inflicting pain (physical/emotional) on myself & others.

If you hurt inside... if you have anger/pain you must release it at a safe time & in a safe manner.

If you are causing pain in any form... it must stop... beginning today.

Beginning today I will come to an understanding that change is a process.

People from dysfunctional families are NOT accustomed to process living. They go from Crisis to Crisis. Recovering people must LEARN to live life as a process. Understand & accept that this learning takes time & the changing takes time. You may not be able to expect an overnight miracle but you can expect a miracle over time...

### East

#### Realm of Knowledge & Enlightenment

The east is the morning direction. New day, new, light, new thought & resolve...

Beginning today I will reawaken to all creation & all of the beauty that exists in the world around me. Like everything worthwhile, opening up again takes work. Open yourself up to new experiences, new persons & new awareness. Begin today; to be... to become... to live...

Beginning today I will release myself from a Narrow view of life & begin to grow, learn & gain new knowledge. You must now begin to give up you narrow & self destructive view of life. Venture forth. Challenge yourself to learn... to grow... & to gain new knowledge... Go beyond fear to begin feeling that you are worth while, that you can make a positive life change.

Beginning today I will remember that I have a sacred right to live my life as I wish & need to bring harmony & balance into my existence by respecting the life rights of others. You have the right to be you. You do not have the right to play a role assigned to you by your dysfunctional family. We need to have love & respect for others as well. We must learn to balance our rights, needs & desires with those of others in order to achieve harmony. You need to have love & respect for others as well. We must learn to balance our rights, needs & desires with those of others to achieve harmony.

Beginning today I will work on understanding the changes I must make in order to achieve personal harmony, balance & freedom.

Consider the cognition & behavior changes that will bring you freedom from your addiction. Move away from old, dysfunctional, destructive life patterns to new balances, functional ways of living. Fear must be replaced with a feeling of personal strength through the caring support of the self by the self & of the self by others. Co-operation must replace tyrannical control & love must replace self hatred.

### South Spiritual Realm

The south is the realm of existence where we will make a connection with a spiritual power greater than ourselves. Some may see this greater power as the collective essence of all people. Others may see this as being pure energy. What matters is that every recovering person connects with a spiritual essence, a power that is greater than him or herself.

Beginning today I will come to an understanding of my special relationship to Mother Earth & release my pain to her. We see the Earth as the Mother to all living things. The soil provides us with food, the stone & soil that trees are in the earth can provide shelter for us. If we know and respect the earth, she will always provide for us. In your recovery, Mother Earth will heal you with her beauty & energy. Touch Mother Earth & ask her to remove your inner sadness, anxiety & fear. Ask her to allow you to let go of negative thinking & negative self perception. Release your pain to Mother Earth & you will be refreshed, released, reborn & freed.

Today I will come to understand my relationship with Father Sky. Father Sky is wind, rain, snow, thunder & lightening, stillness, movement, clarity & cloudiness. It can either take or give life. Father Sky will act as a reminder of the feelings within you; both gentle & destructive. If you watch & respect the ways of Father Sky, you will understand the meaning of balance & feel within you a sense of strength & ability.

Today I will seek the connection I have with all of the universe. This step teaches us to understand humility & belonging. We can continue to heal ourselves by sharing knowledge & love with others. This love & connectedness must be supportive & uplifting. It must be unconditional love. It should not be the kind of love you expected in the past or had expected of you when drugs & alcohol were involved. That type of love is not love at all. You must say; "I am going to begin caring for myself & accept the love & support from others."

Today I will reconnect with & nurture my own spirit. This is the most direct, yet difficult step within the spiritual realm. This step asks you to nurture your own spirit. To do this you must connect with your inner self, with that most private part of you. You must be able to acknowledge your fears, desires, emotions & feelings of distress. Most of all; you must learn to care for your own spirit. Think of your spirit as a child. Find out what can be done to help that child. See if the child needs love, reassurance or comforting. Is the child angry? If so let the child express some anger. Find a safe time & place for that child to let that anger go. That safe time may be in a therapists office or in a sweat lodge, in a support group or in the solitude of your own room. You should find someone who will be caring, supportive & nonjudgmental. Treat your spirit, yourself, with love. Seek out your inner self. Heal your spirit...

### West Realm of Introspective Thought

This is the realm where we must look within ourselves & be honest with what we see or find.

Today I will speak honestly with myself.

This step is asking you to stop suppressing feelings, stop turning off emotions & stop denying that problems exist. For example if you are an adult child of an alcoholic, you may want to appear helpful, calm & in control. In reality you'd be acting helpful as a means of avoiding rejection. You may appear calm. But it is a way of showing inner tension & fear. Your controlled exterior is likely an attempt to cover up your feelings of failure & inadequacy.

In order to be healed, you will need to begin speaking honestly with yourself. As you become aware of the truths of your current life experiences, path to recovery the choices you make will be clear.

Today I will look at my problems & my accomplishments with a willingness to commit myself to positive growth & change.

A person's ability to look at both problems & accomplishments can be an indicator of his/her sense of self.

At this point in the Medicine Wheel, acknowledgement of both problems & accomplishments return balance to your life.

Commitment to positive growth & change provides the path to healing.

Today I will examine the ways in which I have tried to manipulate, control or manage the lives of others. I will make a commitment to stop this behavior.

This step has a great deal of meaning for recovering addicts, adult children of alcoholics, co-dependent persons as well as those from dysfunctional families.

The person must realize that when performing the controlling behaviors that he/she is bringing harm to themselves as well as the individual they have infringed upon.

Let the addicted person or significant other fix their own problem. The responsibility of owning their own problem & facing the consequences will be the other persons problem. You need to stop attempting to manage others & focus on taking responsibility for your own life, your own recovery.

Today I will acknowledge that change in my life must begin with me.

This step is an action step in which you empower yourself to make positive life changes. No one else but you can make changes in your own life. No one else can stop your addiction. Others can help you, encourage you, support you, but only you can stop your addictive process.

Discover your personal path to recovery. A recovery/support group, a therapist or trusted other & your own insight will help you unravel the meaning of each step of the Recovery Medicine Wheel. Many traits of this medicine wheel are like other therapeutic healing methods; 12 step, reality therapy & behavior modification therapy to name a few. We hope you have been enlightened as to the use of the medicine wheel in healing through this information paper.

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Bibliography:

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