

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice or general writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

INTRODUCTION:

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous never tells us directly how to work the first two steps. In the portion of “How It Works” (Chapter 5) read at many meetings, we hear the sentence “Our description of the sex and “love” addict, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

- A. That we were sex and “love” addicts who could not manage our own lives.
- B. That probably no human power could have relieved us of our addiction to sex and “love.”
- C. God could and would if He were sought.”

These three pertinent ideas are what are referred to as the “ABC’s.” What is usually not read in meetings is the sentence that follows: “Being convinced, we were at Step Three.” Convinced of what? The answer is right there: “Convinced of these three pertinent ideas.” So, the book is telling us that in order to arrive at Step Three, we must be convinced of the ABC’s. How do we become convinced?

- 1. By reading the description of the sex and “love” addict found in the “Dr.’s Opinion,” “Bill’s Story,” “There is a Solution,” and “More About Alcoholism.”
- 2. By reading the chapter to the agnostic “We Agnostics.”
- 3. By reading about the personal adventures of those people before and after recovery.

Doing these things is specifically designed to “make clear these three pertinent ideas.” In the original manuscript of the Big Book, it read that if we were not convinced, **“we ought to reread the book up to this point or else throw it away.”** We compare the way we thought, felt, and used sex and “love” with the experiences of the people described in the book. This is how we take steps one and two. The caveat: relating to their experiences may create a problem for the modern reader. The English of today is significantly different from that of 1939 when the Big Book was first published. If you have ever tried to read Shakespeare, you are perhaps aware of the effect time has upon language. Going through the Big Book in the way described here should help you overcome this language problem and give you an understanding of the text which is reflected in your own experience. You may begin to see the Big Book in a new light, and perhaps it will have real meaning in your life today. Much of this workbook consists of statements from the Big Book which have been turned into questions. We found it helpful to view the book in this light rather than as a book of answers; the answers you will find only in your own experience, and within your own heart. For the sake of clarity, some questions are paraphrased rather than directly quoted. If there is something you relate to, describe it, and ask yourself:

What was my experience with this?

Did this happen to me?

Did I feel like this?

Think like this?

Did I act out sexually or romantically like this?

This is not a homework assignment where we try to get through it as quickly as we can with minimum effort. If you are really a sex and “love” addict, then having an understanding of these steps means the difference between life and death.

This workbook is adapted to be used by sex and “love” addicts. Some of us thought we were not addicted to sex and “love” and later discovered we were. We ask you only to try to keep an open mind. This workbook is not meant to replace the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous or the Big Book Awakening Workbook; it is meant to be used alongside them.

Read through the book as you answer each question. The authors hope you will find this way of working the steps as enlightening as we have. Also, because of the difficulty many of us have had in keeping an open mind, each assignment will begin with the set aside prayer.

KEY:

P = Page

¶ = Paragraph

L = Line

Physical Allergy = Physical Craving

Unmanageability = Untreated Sex & Love Addiction = Spiritual Malady

Addictive Relationship = Closed System Relationship

The word “Love” is in quotation marks because what the addict calls *love* is often **not real love**, but something distorted, addictive, or self-centered.

DEFINING SOBRIETY

Defining sobriety from sex and “love” addiction is not as black-and-white as it is with Alcoholism. In A.A. if one picks up a drink, it’s a relapse. If one is a sex and love addict, one must first understand a very important fact:

THE DESIRE FOR SEX AND LOVE IS GOD-GIVEN AND THEREFORE GOOD.

The problem is that our addiction twisted and distorted these desires into unrealistic demands, insatiable crushes, emotional yearnings, lustful pursuits, and false gods-all of which produced a rush of euphoria, endorphins, and adrenaline that sucked us into a cycle we could not control. When it was all over, we were left physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually depleted. We no longer (or never) had a grasp on what healthy sex and love were or who *we* were because our sense of a personal, positive, and independent self-concept was lost in service of the addiction. As the Big Book says, “we could not differentiate the true from the false. To us, our sex and “love” addicted lives seemed the only normal one.”

Since there are a wide variety of sexual and romantic behaviors that take place in the world, we look to our histories to discover which of them are truly addictive for us, which behaviors have led us to our addictive behaviors, and which behaviors are healthy. They are broken down into three categories: bottom-lines, middle-lines, and top-lines.

The Set Aside Prayer (Sobriety Definition)

God, please set aside in me everything I think I know so that I might have an open mind and a new experience. Help me to see the truth about my bottom-line, middle-line, and top-line behaviors.

Bottom Line Behaviors are “Self-defined activities which we refrain from in order to experience our physical, mental, emotional, sexual, and spiritual wholeness.” (SLAA *Welcome Pamphlet* ©1997). Bottom-lines are the boundaries between our addictive lives and “a new life of fulfillment, richness, and mystery [that] surely awaits [us] as [we] move into sobriety...” (*Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous* ©1986, Page 159). Indulging in such a temptation, to use an A.A. analogy, is our “first drink.” (SETTING BOTTOM LINES Pamphlet ©2006 *The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A. Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc.*).

Common Examples of Bottom-Line Behaviors Include:

- Having an affair
- Participating in romantic intrigue
- Not leaving an abusive or addictive relationship
- Voyeurism
- Compulsive avoidance of social/sexual activity
- Paying for sex
- Anonymous sex
- Spending romantic time with someone who is in love with somebody else
- Having sex with someone who is married

Assignment 1

- Pursuing a new relationship before ending an existing one
- Having sex outside a committed, monogamous relationship
- Having sex with a prostitute
- Following someone home uninvited
- Doing anything that could reasonably get me arrested
- Lying to my spouse
- Masturbating to pornography
- Going to strip clubs and peepshows
- Going to bookstores
- Going to bathhouses
- Exhibitionism
- Bestiality
- Sex with minors
- Stalking
- Having sex on the first date
- Having unprotected sex
- Having sex when I don't want to
- Contacting a former sex partner
- Pursuing inappropriate or unavailable people
- Compulsively avoiding sex in a committed long-term relationship
- Not entering or leaving a relationship without consulting God and trusted advisors

Accessory (Middle Line) Behaviors are behaviors that are not destructive by themselves but serve our addiction. It is vital to be aware of these warning signs, obsessions, and rituals that have led to acting out. We look for behaviors that we were not sure belong on our bottom lines or that have minor consequences. These are warning signs that we are in danger of acting out.”

(SETTING BOTTOM LINES Pamphlet ©2006 *The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A. Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc.*). “We found that whenever we engaged in these accessory behaviors, regardless of how innocent or unaware we were of doing so, we had unwittingly set up the potential for sexual and emotional intrigue – just what we were trying so desperately to avoid!” (*Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous* ©1986, Page 108)

Common Examples of Middle-Line Behaviors Include:

- Cruising for sex
- Driving in certain neighborhoods
- Going for a walk at night in dark clothing
- Going places where you will run into a former unavailable partner
- Exchanging phone numbers
- Screening phone calls
- Maintaining multiple phone numbers
- Having conversations with an erotic subtext
- Contacting former sex partners
- Carrying a condom
- Wearing cologne or perfume

Assignment 1

- Dressing provocatively
- Keeping a packed overnight bag
- Having large amounts of cash in your pocket
- Drinking alcohol or using drugs
- Ignoring or overlooking abusive behavior
- Looking up specific search words on the internet
- Reading romance novels
- Seeing romantic movies
- Reading personal ads
- Routinely rejecting social invitations
- Obsessing/fantasizing about unavailable people

Top Line Behaviors: “Many members of the fellowship find it helpful to list behaviors that have a positive, personal-element behaviors that fulfill, nurture, bring healthy pleasure, growth, and improve quality of life. Committing to do them can fill the time we used to spend acting out and can help us grow along spiritual lines.” (SETTING BOTTOM LINES Pamphlet ©2006 *The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A. Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc.*).

Common Examples of Top-Line Behaviors Include:

- Prayer
- Meditation
- Reading spiritual literature
- Taking care of hygiene
- Talking to my sponsor before turning down an invitation to a social event
- Showing up for my commitments
- Playing a musical instrument
- Taking a class
- Exercise
- Travel
- Communing with nature
- Expressing creativity
- Asking for help and support from friends
- Scheduling a time for social interaction, partnership, and intimacy
- Saying affirmations each day
- Calling as many people as needed to actually talk with someone, not just leaving voicemails
- Playing games or sports with others
- Getting a non-erotic massage
- Doing martial arts
- Going to an amusement park

A note about bottom line behaviors over time...

“After you have been in recovery for a while, and have some sobriety, you may discover that your bottom-lines are no longer adequate. You may find your sense of sobriety has changed over

Assignment 1

time. You could become aware of the need to expand your bottom-lines in keeping with your new values and principles. This awareness is progressive, and your bottom-lines may need to change – more than once – to keep pace with your increased recovery.” (SETTING BOTTOM LINES Pamphlet ©2006 *The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A. Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc.*).

MY BOTTOM-LINE (ADDICTIVE) BEHAVIORS ARE:

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MY MIDDLE-LINE (ACCESSORY) BEHAVIORS ARE:

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MY TOP-LINE (HEALTHY) BEHAVIORS ARE:

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CIRCLE & TRIANGLE / PREFACE & FOREWORDS

PAGE I – PAGE XXIV

The Set Aside Prayer (Preface & Forewords)

God, please set aside in me everything I think I know so that I might have an open mind and a new experience. Help me to see the truth about this book, the meetings, the 12 steps, and my disease.

As I look at the Circle & Triangle, I will consider each part.

If you are a NEWCOMER, you can write “N/A” to any question that doesn’t apply:

UNITY SIDE (Fellowship/The Body)

1. How am I doing with my meetings?

2. Do I go to enough meetings?

3. Do I have a home group?

4. Do I have a commitment at a meeting?

5. Do I go to too many meetings?

6. Do I get there early?

7. Do I welcome new people before or after the meeting?

8. Do I make daily outreach calls and share honestly?

Assignment 2

9. Do I help with set up or set down?

RECOVERY SIDE (12 Steps/The Mind)

10. Am I actively going through the 12 Steps?

11. How am I doing with my daily practice of Step 10?

12. How am I doing with my daily practice of Step 11?

13. Have I finished all of the amends on my Step 8 list?

SERVICE SIDE (Carrying the Message/Spirit)

14. Am I working with others and carrying the message?

15. Am I working with others by taking them through the Big Book as I was taken through?

16. Have I looked to see if the way I take people through the work is effective and that they are staying in the program and working with others?

17. Am I giving them enough time? Am I explaining the process well?

Assignment 2

18. Do I have a commitment at a hospital or institution?

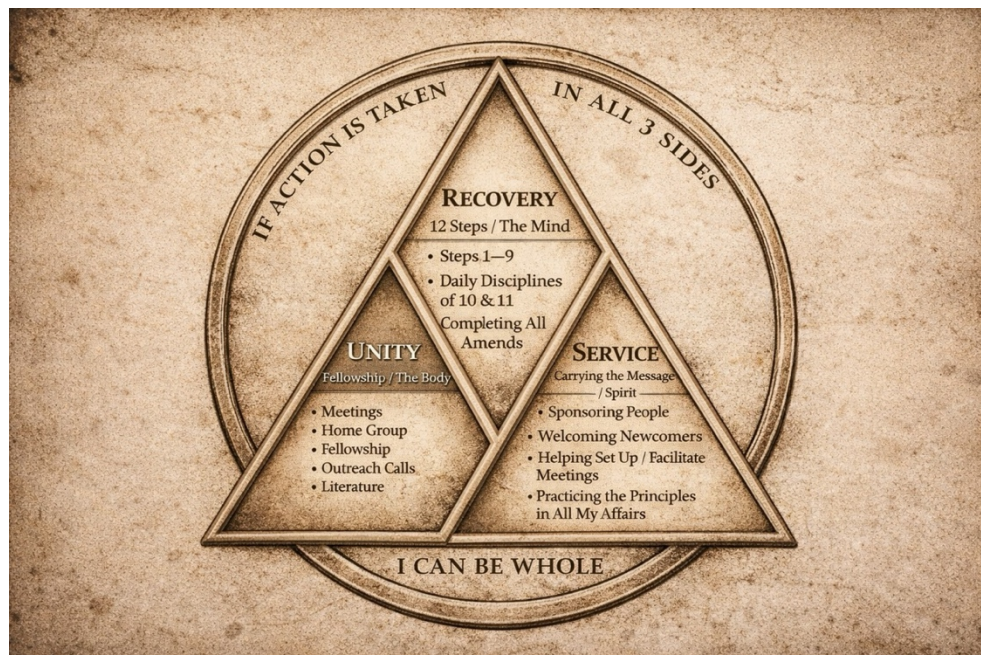
19. The promise is that if action is taken in all three areas, I can be whole. What does that mean to me?

20. The first promise is how hundreds have “recovered.” Am I “recovered” or am I “recovering”?

21. In the Foreword to the First Edition, it says that we have “recovered” from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. Is that true for me?

22. It talks about how “many do not comprehend that the alcoholic and addict are very sick people.” Do I?

23. In the meeting between Dr. Bob and Bill W. in the Foreword to the Second Edition, what stood out to me? – PXV–XVII



Assignment 2

A note from the author of this question guide:

Although the primary means of achieving spiritual wholeness is found through unity (meetings), recovery (steps), and service (carrying the message), many have also found the secondary tools of **literature, journaling, and outreach calls** tremendously helpful, especially when pressed for time and in need of a quicker spiritual “fix.”

DOCTOR'S OPINION

THE FIRST STEP – PART ONE

THE PHYSICAL ALLERGY

PAGE XXV – PAGE XXXII

There are three parts to Step One. The first part deals with the physical allergy. This means that after we have given in to the first small amount of euphoria created by a desire/need to be “loved,” or the endorphins of addictive sexual behaviors, we lose control of ourselves and can no longer direct the course of our lives because the impulse to act out is now directing the course of our lives. Many of us have experienced this before or after a date, fantasizing about the future and how in love we would be, and wound up fueling our addiction and sending us into a frenzy. As sex and “love” addicts, perhaps we have made a plan or decision we were not going to have sex or get involved with that person, vowing this time, “things are going to be different,” “This time I will be good,” but ended up giving in fully to our addiction. We were amazed and ashamed when the sun rose the next morning with someone next to us in bed. Some of us have found ourselves replacing the chemicals associated with sex and “love” addiction with other (accessory) behaviors such as social media, shopping, overspending, eating, or exercise.

The Set Aside Prayer (Physical Craving)

God, please set aside in me everything I think I know so that I might have an open mind and a new experience. Help me to see the truth about my physical craving after I start to act out sexually or romantically.

1. Why am I interested in the plan of recovery described in this book? – PXXV, ¶1, L2

2. Do I believe convincing testimony must surely come from a doctor who has experience with the sufferings of sex and “love” addicts and has witnessed their return to health? Would this be helpful to me? – PXXV, ¶1, L4

3. Am I the type regarded as hopeless—someone who wants to quit acting out but can't? – PXXV, ¶3, L3

Assignment 3

4. Am I the type who has failed completely with other methods of trying to stay permanently sober or control my addiction? What have I tried? – PXXV, ¶5, L2

5. Am I willing to believe that this book has a remedy for me? – PXXVI, ¶1, L3

6. Am I willing to rely on everything the people in this book say about themselves? – PXXVI, ¶1, L4

“Allergy” Definition: A condition of unusual sensitivity to a substance, which in like amounts does not affect others and is characterized by systemic disorders.

The physical allergy described in the Big Book is like having an allergic reaction to strawberries. I can’t eat them without breaking out in an itch. It has nothing to do with what I’m thinking. As with sex and “love” addiction, when I act out sexually or romantically, I break out in an itch to continue doing so. You will see your experience with the physical powerlessness not in the amount you acted out or the severity of the consequences, but in your lack of control.

7. Do I believe that my body is as abnormal as my mind after the first indulgence in my bottom-line behaviors or after entering into an addictive relationship? Why? – PXXVI, ¶2, L2

8. Was I ever told I could not control my thinking, feelings, and behaviors around sex and “love” because I had some form of a mental disorder? – PXXVI, ¶2, L6

Assignment 3

9. Did any explanation I had heard ever satisfy me as to why I could not control my thinking, feelings, and behavior with respect to sex and “love”? What did I hear? What have I told myself? – PXXVI, ¶2, L7

10. Do I believe these things were true to some extent, in fact, to a considerable extent with me? – PXXVI, ¶2, L10

11. Do I believe any picture of me which leaves out this physical factor feels incomplete? What does the physical factor look like when I act out sexually or romantically? – PXXVI, ¶2, L12

12. Does the Doctor’s theory that I have an allergy to the various chemicals which flow through my body when I am acting out explain why I cannot control my fantasies, sexual drive, or emotions once I start? What are some examples? – PXXVI, ¶3, L1

13. Do I believe I need to find a Power which can pull me back from the gates of death and that it must be a power greater than my own? Why? – PXXVII, ¶6, L9

14. When I start acting out or when I meet someone who is my “type” – someone who perfectly fits my arousal template (my “twin flame” or “soul mate”), do I experience a craving for more? – PXXVIII, ¶1, L1

Assignment 3

15. Have I tried to satisfy my craving for sex and “love” by indulging in replacement behaviors that might produce the same euphoria, endorphins, or adrenaline? What are they? – PXXVIII, ¶1

16. Can I safely act out on my bottom-line addictive behaviors in any form at all? – PXXVIII, ¶1, L5

17. Did I form the habit? – PXXVIII, ¶1, L6

18. Could I break it? – PXXVIII, ¶1, L7

19. Did I lose my self-confidence that anything human could keep me sexually or emotionally sober? – PXXVIII, ¶1, L7

20. Was frothy emotional appeal enough to keep me sober permanently (like someone begging me to stop, a spouse threatening divorce, or reading a scientific article about the “dangers” of pornography on the brain)? – PXXVIII, ¶2, L1

Assignment 3

21. If something can keep me sober, must it have depth and weight? Do I think “just say no,” “just don’t think about it,” or “just don’t do it” has enough depth and weight? – PXXVIII, ¶2, L1

22. What effect did my addiction have for me? What did it do for me? – PXXVIII, ¶4, L1

23. Did I experience a “sense of ease and comfort” when acting out or when involved in an addictive relationship? – PXXVIII, ¶4, L1

24. Was the effect so great that after a time, even though I knew it was bad for me, I could not stop and could no longer tell the true from the false? – PXXVIII, ¶4, L2

25. Did my sex and “love” life seem like the only normal one to me? (like thinking that everyone keeps a porn stash in their closet or that everyone cheats on their spouse) – PXXVIII, ¶4, L4

26. Am I restless, irritable, and discontented until I experience a sense of ease and comfort by acting out sexually, romantically, or getting involved in an addictive relationship? – PXXVIII, ¶4, L1

Assignment 3

27. Do I feel remorseful, shameful, or disgusted with myself after indulging in my sex and “love” addiction, once the euphoria, endorphins, and adrenaline have worn off?

28. Do I make poor, unwise, or unsafe choices when I am acting out sexually, romantically, or involved in an addictive relationship? What are some examples?

29. Do I believe that in recovery I must experience the same sense of ease and comfort that I once got by acting out? – PXXVIII, ¶4, L5

30. Is this repeated over and over? – PXXIX, Top ¶, L7

31. Do I have other solutions? What? – PXXIX, Top ¶

32. Has this craving ever become more important than all my other interests (job, family, etc.)? – PXXIX, Top ¶, L2

33. Can I stay stopped on my own? – PXXIX, ¶2, L3

Assignment 3

34. Do I need help? – PXXIX, ¶2, L3

35. Have I ever tried to stop or control the “when, where, and how” of my sex and “love” addiction, or how often I indulge? What are some things I tried? – PXXIX, ¶2

36. Am I the type of sex and “love” addict with whom psychological approaches (treatment centers, counseling, therapy, self-help books, relationship books, pickup artist books, church, retreats, etc.) have failed? What are some examples? – PXXIX, ¶3, L8

37. Do I believe that something more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change and that this is my only answer? – PXXIX, ¶3, L5

38. Did I only succumb to my sex and “love” addiction when things were going badly or did I also succumb when things were going well? – PXXIX, ¶4

39. Was I always “going on the wagon” (swearing off) for keeps? – PXXX, ¶2, L4

Assignment 3

40. Was I unwilling to admit that I cannot safely act out on my bottom-line addictive behaviors or get involved with certain people? Why? – PXXX, ¶3, L1

41. Do I believe that after being entirely free from my bottom-line addictive behaviors or toxic relationship for a period of time I could engage in such things again without danger? Why? – PXXX, ¶3, L4

42. Can I start to fantasize or indulge in my sex and “love” addiction without developing a craving for more? – PXXX, ¶5, L1

43. Did it seem strange to me that only certain people or situations could trigger my addiction, yet once triggered I was out of control? Did I seek multiple partners or encounters and feel pushed deeper into the addiction when outcomes disappointed me?

44. Do I believe this allergy differentiates me and sets me apart from other people? Am I not like other people when it comes to sex, romance, or relationships? – PXXX, ¶5, L4

45. Do I believe the only hope for me is not to seek ease and comfort through my bottom-line addictive behaviors in the first place? – PXXX, ¶5, L7

Assignment 3

46. Do I feel doomed when it comes to my sex and “love” life? – PXXX, ¶6, L4

47. Was I living to find my next sexual, romantic, or relationship fix? Was I living in constant hope of being rescued by a sexual or romantic savior? What did my day look like? – PXXXI, ¶2, L6

CONSIDERATION:

If I have a sobriety date that is 10 days or more and I can’t produce a sense of ease and comfort powerful enough to keep me from acting out or getting involved in an addictive relationship, how is it that I continue to have this sobriety date no matter how I feel?

FIRST HALF OF BILL'S STORY

THE FIRST STEP – PART ONE

THE PHYSICAL ALLERGY

PAGE 1 – BOTTOM OF PAGE 8

The Set Aside Prayer (Physical Craving)

God, please set aside in me everything I think I know so that I might have an open mind and a new experience. Help me to see the truth about my physical craving after I start to act out sexually or romantically.

1. Did I act out sexually or romantically when I was lonely? What about when I was not lonely? – P1, ¶1

2. Were there things that happened early in my acting-out career (ominous warnings) that I failed to heed? (example: friends telling you to STAY AWAY from that person) List three. – P1, ¶3

3. When I was younger, did I think of myself as a leader? – P1, ¶5, L4

4. Was I someone driven to succeed? – P1, ¶5, L4

5. Did I feel like I had to “prove to the world that I was important?” – P1, ¶5, L6

Assignment 4

6. Did I indulge in my sex and “love” addiction when I was at school or work, screwing up my assignments or school/work relationships?

7. Did I constantly feel the need to be with someone in order to feel better? Am I afraid to be alone?

8. Did I develop theories or fantasize about how I would be successful in life and in “love” while indulging in my sex and “love” addiction? – P2, ¶2, L13

9. Did my friends sometimes think I was crazy or emotionally unstable? Did I ever think those things about myself? – P3, Top ¶, L1

10. Did I enjoy some successes early in life, either generally or in “love”? – P3, Top ¶, L3

11. Did my addiction to sex and “love” become more important, serious, or consuming over time? In what ways? – P3, ¶1–2

Assignment 4

12. Did I fight with my spouse, friends, parents, siblings, coworkers, or boss as a result of my sex and “love” addiction? – P3, ¶2, L2

13. Did I become a loner, or settle with someone just so I would not have to be alone? – P3, ¶2, L4

14. Did I begin to fantasize about sex and being in “love” in the morning? Would I wake up alone needing validation, comfort, or rescue?

15. Did I fantasize or indulge in my bottom-line addictive behaviors in order to escape from problems brought on by my sex and “love” addiction? – P4, ¶1

16. What were some of my fantasies and behaviors?

17. Did I become an unwelcome hanger-on at my job, at a bar or club, or around friends, neighbors, or ex-lovers? – P5, Top ¶, L1

Assignment 4

18. Did indulging in my sex and “love” addiction at some point cease to be a luxury and instead become a necessity? Explain. – P5, ¶1, L1

19. Did I still think I could control the consequences of acting out and/or being enmeshed in a closed-system relationship? How? – P5, ¶1, L9

20. Did life gradually get worse? How? – P5, ¶2, L1

21. Did I feel a sense of impending calamity, like something bad was always about to happen? – P6, ¶1, L4

22. Did I have to focus on my next sexual or romantic escapade in order to motivate myself to move forward in life or even to function at all? – P6, ¶1, L13

23. Did this go on for years? – P6, ¶2, L2

24. Did I think about suicide? – P6, ¶1, L11

Assignment 4

25. Did I mix alcohol or drugs with acting out? What did I try? – P7, Top ¶, L1

26. Did I lose or gain weight? Did I stop taking care of myself? What did my health look like? What did my finances look like? – P7, Top ¶, L2

27. Did I seek help, gain knowledge about myself, learn my sex and “love” triggers, and try to get in touch with my feelings? Did this self-knowledge alone work, or did I end up acting out anyway? – P7, ¶2, L9

28. Can self-knowledge fix me? Why or why not? – P7, ¶2, L9

29. Was I told I would die if I did not stop? Or that I would kill someone, go to jail, become a registered sex offender, lose my marriage, or get an STD? – P7, ¶3, L5

30. Was I as hopeless as Bill—wanting to stop acting out or wanting to get out of an addictive relationship but unable to do so? – P8, Top ¶, L3

31. Did I feel loneliness, despair, and self-pity? – P8, ¶1, L1

Assignment 4

32. Did I ever feel that sex, “love,” or my emotions were my master? – P8, ¶1, L4

33. Did realizing I had no power scare me? Was I afraid? – P8, ¶1, L4

34. Did this fear keep me sober, or did I act out again anyway? – P8, ¶2, L2

SECOND HALF OF BILL'S STORY

THE FIRST STEP – PART ONE

THE PHYSICAL ALLERGY

BOTTOM OF PAGE 8 – PAGE 16

The Set Aside Prayer (Physical Craving)

God, please set aside in me everything I think I know so that I might have an open mind and a new experience. Help me to see the truth about my physical craving after I start to act out sexually or romantically.

1. Did my human will fail me? Did I really decide to act out again, or did I just convince myself it was my decision so I could feel like I was in control? – P11, ¶3, L3

2. Have I been pronounced incurable? – P11, ¶3, L4

3. Am I ready to admit complete defeat? What meaning does this have for me? – P11, ¶3, L5

4. Do I understand that I can choose my own conception of God, and that it only has to make sense to me? – P12, ¶2, L2

5. Do I believe that if I do not work with others, I will surely act out again or live desperately for the pursuit of sex and the validation of others? – P14, ¶6, L2

Assignment 5

6. Do I understand the absolute necessity of demonstrating these principles in all my affairs if I want to stay sober from my bottom-line behaviors and experience a life of wholeness?
– P14, ¶6, L1

7. Am I willing to abandon myself with enthusiasm to the idea of helping other sex and “love” addicts find a solution to their problems? – P15, ¶1, L1

8. Am I willing to attend meetings frequently so that the newcomer may find the fellowship they seek? – P15, ¶2, L14

FIRST HALF OF THERE IS A SOLUTION

THE FIRST STEP – PART ONE

THE PHYSICAL ALLERGY

PAGE 17 – TOP OF PAGE 23

The Set Aside Prayer (Physical Craving)

God, please set aside in me everything I think I know so that I might have an open mind and a new experience. Help me to see the truth about my physical craving after I start to act out sexually or romantically.

1. Was I as hopeless as Bill (wanting to quit acting out sexually or romantically but unable to)? – P17, ¶1, L3

2. Is there any other hope for me? In what ways? – P17, ¶1, L4

3. Is the fellowship by itself (just going to meetings) enough for me to permanently stay off of my bottom-line behaviors? Will just attending meetings but not completing the steps or sponsoring others produce a sense of lasting personal wholeness? Explain. – P17, ¶2, L16

4. Do I have a way to stay sober from my sex and “love” addiction without help? What have I tried? – P17, ¶2, L3

5. Have I come to believe that I suffer from an illness: physically, mentally, and spiritually? How does each one affect me? – P18, ¶1, L1

Assignment 6

6. Did my illness affect the people around me in a way no other human sickness can? Who was affected? – P18, ¶1, L2

7. Was I unable to discuss my situation honestly without lying to my spouse, parents, or intimate friends? – P18, ¶3, L3

8. When approached by a potential sponsor or step partner, was he or she like me? – P19, Top Margin

9. Did he or she obviously know what they were talking about? – P19, ¶5, L2

10. Did their whole deportment (behavior, conduct, posture, demeanor, and etiquette) shout at me that they are a person with a real answer? – P18, ¶5, L2

11. Did they have no attitude of “holier than thou,” meaning they do not think they are better than anyone else? – P18, ¶5, L5

Assignment 6

12. Is the elimination of acting out behaviors from my life enough? Or is this just the beginning? – P19, ¶1, L3

13. If I keep on “just not acting out,” even though things get better, do I believe the surface of the problem is hardly scratched? Why? – P19, ¶2, L1

14. Does my life depend upon my constant thought of others and how I may help meet their needs? As a newcomer, what can I do to help? – P20, Top ¶, L1

15. Am I curious to discover how and why these people have recovered from a hopeless condition of mind and body? – P20, ¶1, L3

16. Can I engage in acting out and then simply leave it alone? – P20, ¶3, L1

17. Could I control or manage my sex and “love” addiction once it begins? – P20, ¶3, L4

18. Do I really have a choice when the craving begins? – P20, ¶3, L5

Assignment 6

19. Is my willpower weak when it comes to my sex and “love” addiction? – P20, ¶3, L5

20. Could I stop acting out if I truly wanted to? – P20, ¶3, L6

21. Could I stop for someone else (a partner, spouse, or person I cared about)? When have I tried? – P20, ¶3, L7

22. If a doctor told me that if I ever acted out again it would destroy my life, could I stop? – P20, ¶3, L8

23. Do I believe the people who can do these things are physically and mentally very different from me? – P20, ¶4, L4

THREE TYPES OF PEOPLE

AND HOW EACH USES SEX AND LOVE

TYPE 1: THE MODERATE/SOFT ROMANTIC

The moderate sex and love user. We have all known people who could go out on a date, not have sex, and not fantasize or obsess about the person/interaction. They may appreciate the date or recognize the person’s beauty, but don’t get swept away by the experience. There are also people who can be in a committed monogamous relationship and not flirt or cheat. These people can have sex however they believe is right and moderate their behavior and emotions with little trouble.

Assignment 6

24. Do I have little trouble controlling my sexual or romantic conduct if given a good reason?
– P20, ¶5, L1

25. Can I take it or leave it alone when it comes to my addictive sexual and romantic behaviors? – P20, ¶5, L3

26. Am I just a moderately promiscuous person or a soft romantic? Have I ever truly been that way? Do I know people like this? Who? – P20, ¶5

TYPE 2: THE HABITUALLY PROMISCUOUS/HARD ROMANTIC

There were also people whose sexual and romantic conduct looked very much like ours and who were able to keep up with us. They pursued sex, romance, and relationships as intensely as we did. They engaged in the same kinds of behaviors we did, yet something eventually happened that caused them to stop or moderate on their own without spiritual help. Perhaps they got married, had a child, became ill, or went back to school. Or maybe they faced potential consequences such as their partner leaving them, jail time, or an STD. For them, it was either a phase they grew out of or a consequence they wanted to avoid. Though they may have indulged in irresponsible behavior as much as, or even more than, we did, they are very different from a real sex and love addict.

27. Did acting out sexually or romantically gradually impair me physically and mentally? – P20, ¶6, L2

28. Could my sex and “love” addiction cause me to die a few years before my time? – P21, Top ¶, L1

Assignment 6

29. Could I stay stopped from acting out if given a sufficiently strong reason? – P21, Top ¶, L2

30. Could I stay stopped because of ill health (STD)? – P21, Top ¶, L3

31. Could I stay stopped because I fell in love? When? – P21, Top ¶, L3

32. Could I stay stopped because of a change of environment a.k.a. “the geographical solution?” When? – P21, Top ¶, L3

33. If a doctor, therapist, employer, judge, or probation officer told me to stop acting out for good, could I do it? – P21, Top ¶, L4

34. Am I just a hard user of sex and “love”? – P21, Top ¶

35. Does this description fit me, or do I know people who stopped for reasons like these? Describe. – P21, Top ¶

TYPE 3: THE REAL SEX AND “LOVE” ADDICT

36. Did I start off pursuing sex and “love” in a moderate way? – P21, ¶1, L1

37. Did I become someone who was very sexually promiscuous and continuously preoccupied with finding someone to complete me/save me? – P21, ¶1, L2

38. Did I, at some stage in my life, lose control of my sex and “love” conduct? – P21, ¶1, L3

39. Can I stay stopped on my own like a moderate or hard user can? Or am I physically and mentally addicted to sex and “love”? – P21, Top Margin

40. Did I do absurd, incredible, or tragic things while in the fantasy or obsession of sex and “love”? – P21, ¶2, L2

41. Was I like a real Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde when it came to my sex and “love” addiction? – P21, ¶2, L3

Assignment 6

42. Was I seldom mildly crazy, but more or less insane all the time when it came to sex, love, and relationships? – P21, ¶2, L3

43. Was the person I became when indulging in my sex and “love” addiction very different from who I was when sober from my bottom-line behaviors? If so, how? – P21, ¶2, L3

44. Did I become dangerously antisocial in my sex and “love” addiction? When in an addictive relationship, did I close myself out to the rest of the world and seek all of my energy, validation, and security from my partner? (Hence the term “closed-system relationship”) – P21, ¶2, L8

45. Did I have a knack for acting out at the worst possible time? – P21, ¶2, L9

46. Am I often perfectly sensible and well-balanced concerning everything except sex and romance, but in those respects am I incredibly dishonest? – P21, ¶2, L12

47. Do I use my gifts to build up a bright future, only to sabotage it with my sex and “love” addiction? – P21, ¶2, L17

Assignment 6

48. Do I go to bed consumed with obsession/fantasy and wake up continuing the same thoughts or cravings for sex or love? – P21, ¶2, L20

49. Do I hide some or all of my romantic or sexual interactions so others in my life will not know about them? – P22, Top ¶, L2

50. Do I need someone or something to focus on sexually or romantically just to function? Is this my main motivator in life? (the thing that gives me purpose and drives me forward) – P22, Top ¶

51. Does this description roughly sound like me? In what ways? – P22, ¶1

52. Why can't I stay stopped from acting out? Why can't I either be content alone or content in a healthy relationship? – P22, ¶2, L4

53. What has become of my common sense and willpower that I still sometimes display in other matters? – P22, ¶2, L5

Assignment 6

54. Does my experience confirm that once I start acting out on my bottom-line behaviors, something happens in my mind and body that makes it nearly impossible to stop until the allergy runs its course? – P22, ¶4

**END OF PHYSICAL CRAVING
BEGINNING OF MENTAL OBSESSION**

SECOND HALF OF THERE IS A SOLUTION

THE FIRST STEP – PART TWO

THE MENTAL OBSESSION

TOP OF PAGE 23 – PAGE 29

The second part of Step One deals with the mental obsession. This simply means that no matter how bad it was the last time we thought we knew best, no matter how much we have to lose, no matter how much we want to quit our bad behaviors forever, left to our own unaided will, we will always seek out sex and “love.” Bill Wilson compares this to putting your hand on a hot stove over and over again. It is not a matter of “learning our lesson.” If it were, wouldn’t we have learned it long ago? This is the kind of lesson we never learn. We just keep doing it over and over again until we die. Before you move on to the mental obsession, make sure you are absolutely clear on the physical allergy. Remember, this is not about just telling other people what you think they want to hear; it’s about what you really believe is true for you.

The Set Aside Prayer (Mental Obsession)

God, please set aside in me everything I think I know so that I might have an open mind and a new experience. Help me to see the truth about my mental obsession before I start to act out sexually or romantically.

1. Am I mentally powerless over my sex and “love” addiction before the first instance of acting out?

2. Having acknowledged that I cannot control my behaviors once triggered, do I agree that this is beside the point if I never get triggered to act out? – P23, ¶1, L1

3. Do I believe the main problem centers in my mind rather than in my body? – P23, ¶1, L3

4. Could I always find an excuse to act out? – P23, ¶1, L7

Assignment 7

5. Did this malady of the mind have a real hold on me, leaving me baffled? – P23, ¶2, L6

6. Have I suffered from the obsession that somehow, someday, I will control and enjoy my sex and “love” addiction? – P23, ¶2, L7

7. Do I believe I can assert my willpower to stay stopped forever? – P23, ¶3, L5

8. Am I powerless over whether I will start again? Have I lost mental control over staying stopped? – P23, ¶4, L2

9. Based on my own experience, have I discovered the truth that I am a real sex and “love” addict? What does this mean for me? – P23, ¶4

10. Will my strongest desire to stop acting out keep me sober? What have I tried? – P24, Top ¶, L3

11. Have I lost the power of choice in acting out, or did I reach a point where there was more involved than choice? – P24, ¶1, L2

Assignment 7

12. Has my so-called willpower become weak and practically nonexistent? – P24, ¶1, L3

13. Was I unable at certain times to bring into my mind with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago? – P24, ¶1, L4

14. Am I without defense against the next obsession to act out? – P24, ¶1, L7

15. Did I ever decide to quit for good—to never obsess again or engage in sex when I knew I shouldn't? – P24, ¶1

16. Did deciding to quit for good work, or did I become sexually and romantically obsessed again even though I promised myself I would not? – P24, ¶1

17. Did I think the consequences that follow acting out even a little would stop me? – P24, ¶2, L1

18. If I start to think it through when these thoughts occur, are they hazy? – P24, ¶2, L3

Assignment 7

19. Have I ever said to myself in a casual way, “It won’t hurt me this time”? – P24, ¶3, L1

20. Or perhaps at times, did I not think at all before acting out? – P24, ¶3, L3

21. Have I ever asked myself, “How did I ever get started again?” – P24, ¶3, L6

22. Do I think anything human can stop that part of me that leads me back to the first instance of acting out? – P24, ¶4, L3

23. Do I believe this 12-step process is what is required for me to change and that it is my only solution? Why? – P25, ¶1, L4

24. Have I seen that it really worked in others? Who? – P25, ¶1, L4

25. Have I come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of my life as I had been living it? – P25, ¶1, L5

Assignment 7

26. Was I approached by others in whom the problem had been solved? Who? – P25, ¶1, L7

27. Is there anything left for me but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at my feet (the 12 steps)? – P25, ¶1, L9

28. Do I believe there is anything less for me than a deep and effective spiritual experience that will revolutionize my whole attitude toward life, toward my fellows, and toward God's universe? – P25, ¶2, L2

29. Do I believe there is any middle-of-the-road solution for me? Why? (A middle of the road solution is anything that does not help me have a deep and effective spiritual experience. Examples include: "Just don't act out and go to meetings," "Attend 90 meetings in 90 days," and "Make 3 outreach calls a day") – P25, ¶3, L1

30. Was I in a position where life was becoming impossible and I had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid? What could any person tell me or do for me that would make me stop acting out or leave my addictive relationship for good and for all? – P25, ¶3, L3

31. Do I have any alternative but to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of my intolerable situation as best I could (acting out in other areas of my life), or to accept spiritual help? – P25, ¶3, L5

Assignment 7

32. Do I honestly want to and am I willing to make the effort to accept spiritual help? What will that look like? – P25, Top ¶, L1

33. Do I believe that with a profound knowledge of the inner workings of my mind, relapse is unthinkable? Why? – P26, ¶1, L11

34. Do I think I can quit forever without spiritual help? Why or why not? – P27, ¶1, L2

35. Do I believe I have the mind of a chronic (persistent & recurring) sex and “love” addict? – P27, ¶2, L1

36. Am I truly a sex and “love” addict, and do I really want this program? What makes me a real addict? – P27, ¶3, L14

37. If I am powerless over my sex and “love” addiction and will never regain control, do I still have a choice today? – P29, Bottom Margin

Assignment 7

CONSIDERATION:

How is it that I have a sobriety date if once I begin acting out something happens in both my mind and body that makes it nearly impossible to stop?

FIRST HALF OF MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM

THE FIRST STEP – PART TWO THE MENTAL OBSESSION

PAGE 30 – TOP OF PAGE 37

The Set Aside Prayer (Mental Obsession)

God, please set aside in me everything I think I know so that I might have an open mind and a new experience. Help me to see the truth about my mental obsession before I start to act out sexually or romantically.

1. In the past, have I been unwilling to admit I am a sex and “love” addict, meaning that I could not control my fantasies, obsessions and behaviors brought on by my addiction and could not stay stopped permanently on my own power? – P30, ¶1, L3

2. What does being a sex and “love” addict mean to me? – P30, ¶1

3. Am I bodily and mentally different from others in how I act out in my sex and “love” addiction? – P30, ¶1, L3

4. Has my addiction career been characterized by countless vain attempts to control my sex and “love” addiction? Give a few examples. – P30, ¶1, L4

Assignment 8

5. Has the idea that somehow, someday I will control and enjoy my sex and “love” addiction been an obsession of mine? – P30, ¶1, L6

6. Was the persistence of this illusion astonishing (that I could control my sex and “love” addiction) and did I pursue it into the gates of insanity or death? – P30, ¶1, L9

7. Have I learned that I had to fully concede to my innermost self that I am a sex and “love” addict? – P30, ¶2, L1

8. Do I believe the delusion that I’m like other people, even now as a sober person, has to be smashed? How am I different? – P30, ¶2, L3

9. Have I lost the ability to control my sex and “love” addiction, the amount I take, or staying stopped? – P30, ¶3, L1

10. Do I believe that I will ever recover control? – P30, ¶3, L3

11. Have I felt at times I was regaining control? How? – P30, ¶3, L3

Assignment 8

12. But weren't such intervals, usually brief, inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization (doing things I promised I would never do)? Give a few examples. – P30, ¶3, L4

13. Am I convinced that I'm in the grip of a progressive illness and that over any considerable period I will get worse, never better? – P30, ¶3, L8

14. Does there appear to be any kind of treatment which will make me like other people? – P30, ¶4, L2

15. In some instances, has there been brief recovery? When? – P31, Top ¶, L2

16. Wasn't it followed always by a still worse relapse? Give an example. – P31, Top ¶, L3

17. Do I believe there is no such thing as making a normal person out of a sex and "love" addict? – P31, Top ¶, L5

Assignment 8

18. By every form of denial and experimentation have I tried to prove myself an exception to the rule and therefore a non-addict? – P31, ¶1, L2

19. Have I tried hard and long enough to act out like other people? – P31, ¶1, L8

Which of these methods have you tried to act out like normal people or control your addiction?

Only acting out on certain days or times: ____

Only acting out in certain places or environments: ____

Limiting the number of videos, images, partners, or time spent acting out: ____

Never acting out alone: ____

Bookending your acting out excursions with fellows in recovery to have “accountability”: ____

Never having porn or dating apps on my phone: ____

Switching from porn/masturbation to one-night stands: ____

Switching from one-night stands to friends with benefits: ____

Switching from friends with benefits to uncommitted romantic flings: ____

Agreeing to quit if I ever acted out in inappropriate places (work, school, etc.): ____

Pursuing a geographical solution – moving to a new place to start afresh: ____

Avoiding certain places, people, or apps: ____

Installing porn blockers: ____

Travelling to other countries because the people are easier to pick up: ____

Travelling to countries where sex work is legal: ____

Buying a device to act out with and then returning it afterward: ____

Deleting dating apps or porn sites and later reinstalling them: ____

Swearing off sex or relationships forever, with or without a solemn oath: ____

Taking on more exercise or healthy habits: ____

Reading inspirational or self-help books: ____

Reading books on pickup artistry, dating, or relationships: ____

Going to therapy, retreats, seminars, or treatment programs: ____

Accepting voluntary commitment to recovery or treatment: ____

Only acting out with consenting partners instead of paying for sex: ____

Only acting out when not under the influence of drugs or alcohol: ____

Only acting out with someone I feel a “connection” with: ____

Trying to replace porn with compulsive dating or relationships: ____

Trying to replace relationships with porn or fantasy: ____

Trying to control my behaviors while still feeding the fantasies: ____

Trying to control my fantasies while still feeding the behaviors: ____

Acting out on bottom-line behaviors but this time “bringing God into the experience”: ____

Assignment 8

20. Do I believe having a long period of sobriety will be powerful enough for me to choose whether I act out again? – P32, ¶2, L13

21. Do I believe that in order to stop acting out for good, there must be no reservation of any kind, nor any lurking notion that somehow, someday, I will be able to pursue sex and romance the way “normal” people do? – P33, ¶1, L9

22. Do I feel I had gone on acting out years beyond the point where I could quit on my own willpower? – P34, ¶1, L1

23. Could I leave sex and “love” addiction alone for one year without a program? – P34, ¶1, L4

24. Do I desire to stop entirely? – P34, ¶2, L3

25. Can I stay stopped upon a nonspiritual basis? – P34, ¶2, L4

26. Have I lost the power to choose whether I will act out or not? – P34, ¶2, L5

Assignment 8

27. Was I confused by my utter inability to leave my addictive sexual and romantic behaviors alone, no matter how great the necessity or the wish? – P34, ¶2, L10

28. Do I believe the mental states that precede a relapse are the center of my problem? – P35, Top ¶, L1

The mental states that precede a relapse into acting out are:

- A peculiar mental twist (page 33, ex. Jim, falsely believing that milk combined with whiskey renders the whiskey safe)
- A strange mental blank spot (page 42, ex. Fred, truthfully anticipating that two cocktails with dinner would be nice but failing to anticipate further consequences)
- Beginning to act out deliberately, not casually (page 37)
- Little serious or effective thought (page 37)
- Not thinking at all (page 24)
- Two trains of thought running in parallel (page 37)

In other words: thinking, not thinking, thinking one thing at a time, thinking more than one thing at a time, thinking false things, and thinking true things.

29. Do I believe that if I fail to enlarge my spiritual life I will act out again? Or live like I need to act out? – P35, ¶3, L5

30. Were there times when all good reasons for not acting out were easily pushed aside in favor of the foolish idea that I could control myself this time? Example? – P36, ¶3, L6

Assignment 8

List below the 10 most insane things you ever did while acting out:

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

SECOND HALF OF MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM

THE FIRST STEP – PART TWO

THE MENTAL OBSESSION

TOP OF PAGE 37 – PAGE 43

The Set Aside Prayer (Mental Obsession)

God, please set aside in me everything I think I know so that I might have an open mind and a new experience. Help me to see the truth about my mental obsession before I start to act out sexually or romantically.

1. Have I suffered from a distorted ability to think straight about my acting out behaviors in order to see the truth? – P37, ¶1, L3

2. Did my best thinking fail to hold me in check and did my insane idea win out so I acted out anyway? Example? – P37, ¶2, L8

Go back and review the list of the 10 most insane things you ever did when you were acting out. The most insane thing you ever did is probably not on this list, because you did it sober. In all likelihood, the most insane thing you did was this: with the things on this list happening when you were acting out, you made a decision to act out again, and you made this decision when you were as sober as you are now.

3. Did I read the “Jaywalker story” and if I apply it to my acting out career does it fit exactly? – P37, ¶4 - P38, ¶2

4. Do I believe that the humiliating experiences, plus the knowledge I have acquired, will keep me sober the rest of my life? Will self-knowledge fix me? – P40, Top ¶, L4

Assignment 9

5. Do I believe that having an addict's mind, the time and place WILL come when by myself, on my own power – I will fantasize, obsess, and resort to old behaviors, NO MATTER HOW MUCH I WANT TO STAY SOBER TODAY? – P41, ¶2, L8

6. On my own power, though I may raise a fight, will I someday give way to some trivial reason for acting out? – P42, Top ¶, L1

7. Do I believe this problem has me hopelessly defeated? – P42, Top ¶, L9

8. Has this process snuffed out the last flicker of conviction that I could do the job myself? “I can keep myself sober?” – P42, ¶1, L9

9. Do I believe I will have to throw several lifelong conceptions out of the window to go through this program of action? Give an example. “I can do the job myself.” – P42, ¶2, L6

10. Do I believe it's important to discover how spiritual principles will solve all my problems, and that this is not just about refraining from acting out? – P42, ¶3, L1

Assignment 9

11. Is there any doubt in my mind that I'm 100% hopeless, apart from divine help, or is there any other solution for me? What? – P43, ¶3, L7

12. Do I believe at certain times I have no effective mental defense against the first fantasy or behavior? Do I know when that time will be? – P43, ¶3, L1

13. Do I believe that no human being can provide such a defense? – P43, ¶3, L4

14. Must my defense come from a Higher Power other than human power? – P43, ¶3, L4

15. Then how can I depend on the group as my Higher Power? – P43, ¶3

CONSIDERATION

If I have a sobriety date that is 10 days or more and I have no effective mental defense against the first acting out behavior, how is it that I continue to have this sobriety date no matter what I've thought?

WE AGNOSTICS
THE FIRST STEP – PART THREE
THE SPIRITUAL MALADY
PAGES 44, 45, & 52

Unmanageability = Untreated Sex and “Love” Addiction = Spiritual Malady.
This condition exists before and after acting out, whether I am sober or not.

The Set Aside Prayer (Spiritual Malady)

God, please set aside in me everything I think I know so that I might have an open mind and a new experience. Help me to see the truth about the unmanageability of my life.

1. In the preceding chapters, have I learned something about sex and “love” addiction?
What is the main thing I must have to be a real addict? – P44, ¶1, L1

2. Have they made clear the differences between the addict and the nonaddict? What are the main differences? – P44, ¶1, L2

3. When I honestly wanted to, did I find I could not quit acting out entirely? – P44, ¶1, L4

4. When acting out, did I have little control over my thoughts, feelings, and behaviors? – P44, ¶1, L5

5. Am I a sex and “love” addict? – P44, ¶1, L7

Assignment 10

6. Faced with these two problems, do I believe I'm suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer or do I still have other options? List them. – P44, ¶1, L7

7. Am I an addict of the hopeless variety, one who wants to quit but can't? – P44, ¶2, L3

8. Have I faced the fact that I must find a spiritual basis of life – or else? – P44, ¶3, L5

9. In my case, is a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life sufficient to overcome sex and “love” addiction, or if they were, would I have recovered long ago? – P44, ¶4, L1

10. Do I believe knowing the way of thinking and living described in this book will save me, or do I need access to Power from this process to overcome sex and “love” addiction? – P44, ¶4, L2

11. Have I found that such codes and philosophies did not save me, no matter how much I tried? What have I tried? – P45, Top ¶, L1

12. Could I wish to think and act right and pull it off? – P45, Top ¶, L3

Assignment 10

13. Did I wish to have a belief system that comforts me? – P45, Top ¶, L4

14. Did I want these things with all my might, only to find the needed power wasn't there? – P45, Top ¶, L5

15. Have my human resources (my perception, interpretation, and understanding of the situation), as guided by my will power (my mind), not been sufficient to create the life I want? Did I fail completely? – P45, Top ¶, L6

16. Is lack of power my dilemma? – P45, ¶1, L1

17. Must I find a Power by which I can live? – P45, ¶1, L2

18. Is this obvious? Why? – P45, ¶1, L3

19. Where and how am I to find this Power? – P45, ¶1, L3

Assignment 10

The third part of the First Step deals with the unmanageability of the spirit. Why is it that no matter what the consequences, we always end up acting out with sex and “love”? Without something to take the place of the euphoria, endorphin, and adrenaline rush in our lives, we are doomed. Many of us thought that if we could just stay away from the people, places and things that trigger our addiction, life would be wonderful; but we later discovered this was not so. Abstinence from sex and love or the avoidance of sex and love by choosing to be alone, without working the steps, may feel good for a while. But it’s much like peeing in your pants on a really cold day; it feels nice and warm for a while, but when the cold wind blows it obviously is not a long-term solution. We become so “restless, irritable and discontent” that after a time, we cannot imagine how acting out with sex and “love” could make us feel any worse, and so we do. We must somehow find a way to “experience a sense of ease and comfort” WITHOUT touching the bottom-line behaviors. This “spiritual unmanageability” is what the other eleven steps treat. “When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.” (Page 64) This part of Step One, unmanageability, has nothing to do with God. It’s just about us on our own power trying to run on our own will and lives.

20. Am I willing to change my point of view concerning my human problems as I changed my point of view concerning the obsession and the craving? Maybe the problem is inside rather than outside? – P52, ¶2, L1

21. Am I having trouble with personal relationships? With whom? (Family, Fellowship, Intimate Relationship, Friends, Work) – P52, ¶2, L3

22. Can I control my emotional nature (not my emotions, but how I experience the world deep down inside)? How? – P52, ¶2, L4

23. Am I prey (vulnerable) to misery and depression? When? – P52, ¶2, L5

Assignment 10

24. Can I make a living satisfying enough to keep me happy or sober? – P52, ¶2, L6

25. Do I have a feeling of uselessness (insignificance)? In what way, at home or work? – P52, ¶2, L6

26. Am I full of fear? What am I afraid of? – P52, ¶2, L7

27. Am I unhappy (empty, flat, lifeless, purposeless)? In what ways? – P52, ¶2, L7

28. Do I seem unable to be of real help to other people? – P52, ¶2, L8

29. Is not a basic solution of these problems of lack of power more important than anything in the world around me? – P52, ¶2, L9

CONSIDERATION

If I have a sobriety date that is 10 days or more and I lack the power to live on the necessary spiritual basis of life, how is it that I continue to have this sobriety date, no matter what forms the spiritual malady is taking?

Summary of the First Step:

If you are really a sex and “love” addict, the only solution to the physical allergy is to not act out on your bottom lines again. We cannot, however, apply this solution because of the mental obsession, which always leads us back to our bottom-line behaviors. Rather than give us hope, the first step is designed to utterly destroy whatever hope we may have left that we are able to stay sober without spiritual help. It means that for us, the war on the sex and “love” addiction is over, and we lost. This is called surrender. In a very real way, the other eleven steps do for us slowly what the pursuit of sexual adventure and romantic intrigue did quickly - they give us a sense of ease and comfort. Once we have a spiritual awakening as the result of working these steps, the mental obsession is removed. The Twelve Steps are a recipe for a spiritual experience.

What Does Surrender Mean?

Sex and “love” addiction, still very much in its infancy, was celebrating a third or fourth anniversary of one of the groups. The speaker immediately preceding me told in detail of the efforts of his local group -- which consisted of two men -- to get him to sober up and become its third member. After several months of vain efforts on their part and repeated nosedives on his, the speaker went on to say: "Finally, I got cut down to size and have been sober ever since," a matter of some two or three years. When my turn came to speak, I used his phrase "cut down to size" as a text around which to weave my remarks. Before long, out of the corner of my eye, I became conscious of a disconcerting stare. It was coming from the previous speaker. It was perfectly clear: He was utterly amazed that he had said anything which made sense to a psychiatrist. The incident showed that two people, one approaching the matter clinically and the other relying on his own intuitive report of what had happened to him, both came up with exactly the same observation: the need for ego reduction.

It is common knowledge that a return of the full-fledged ego can happen at any time. Years of sobriety are no insurance against its resurgence. No sex and “love” addict, regardless of their veteran status, can ever relax their guard against a reviving ego. The function of surrender in the recovery process is now clear: It produces that stopping by causing the individual to say, "I quit. I give up on my headstrong ways. I've learned my lesson." Very often for the first time in that individual's adult career, he has encountered the necessary discipline that halts him in his headlong pace. Actually, he is lucky to have within him the capacity to surrender. It is that which differentiates him from the wild animals. And this happens because we can surrender and truly feel, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

Unfortunately, that ego will return unless the individual learns to accept a disciplined way of life, which means the tendency toward ego comeback is permanently checked. This is not news to sex and “love” addicts. They have learned that a single surrender is not enough. Under the wise leadership of the fellowship's founders, the need for continued endeavor to maintain that miracle has been steadily stressed. The Twelve Steps urge repeated inventories, not just one, and the Twelfth Step is in itself a routine reminder that one must work at preserving sobriety. Moreover, it is referred to as Twelfth Step work -- which is exactly what it is. By that time, the miracle is for the other person” (*Excerpts from a letter by Psychiatrist Dr. Harry Tiebout M.D. entitled “Twelve Steps as Ego Deflating Devices - “A.A.” has been changed to “Sex and “love” addiction.”*)

THE TWELVE PROMISES OF SEX AND “LOVE” ADDICTION

Many of us searched for years for the answer to the question of “Why did I act out with sex and love?” Some of us found it the last place we ever thought to look: in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. We did have to rephrase a few lines though. (Thanks to Dan S. for the idea.)

If we are painstaking about using sex and “love,” we will be amazed before we are halfway through.

When acting out with sex and “love,” we are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

When acting out with sex and “love,” we will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

When acting out with sex and “love,” we will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, while acting out with sex and “love,” we will see how our experience can benefit others.

When acting out with sex and “love,” that feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.

When acting out with sex and “love,” we will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.

When acting out with sex and “love,” self-seeking will slip away.

When acting out with sex and “love,” our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.

When acting out with sex and “love,” fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.

When acting out with sex and “love,” we will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

We will suddenly realize that acting out with sex and “love” was doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

The problem with these promises was that in the end, they became lies.

We had to seek a new Higher Power!

FIRST HALF OF WE AGNOSTICS

THE SECOND STEP

THE SPIRITUAL MALADY

PAGE 44 – TOP OF PAGE 51

The Set Aside Prayer (Coming to Believe)

God, please set aside in me everything I think I know so that I might have an open mind and a new experience. Help me to see the truth about my need to come to believe in a power greater than myself.

Definition of an **ATHEIST**: Denies there is a God.

Definition of an **AGNOSTIC**: Does not rely on or know if there is a God that will work in their life.

1. Am I an atheist or agnostic? – P44, ¶2, L1

2. When others mention God, have they reopened a subject which I thought I had neatly evaded or entirely ignored? – P45, ¶2, L11

3. Do I have honest doubt and prejudice? List it. – P45, ¶3, L11

4. Have I been anti-religious? – P45, ¶3, L2

5. Does the word “God” bring up a particular idea of Him which someone had tried to impress upon me during childhood? – P45, ¶3, L3

Assignment 11

6. Did I reject this particular conception of God? – P45, ¶3, L5

7. With that rejection, had I abandoned the God idea entirely? – P45, ¶3, L7

8. Am I bothered with the thought that faith and dependence upon a Power greater than myself was somewhat weak, even cowardly? – P46, ¶1, L1

9. Am I able to lay aside prejudice and express a willingness to believe in a Power greater than myself? – P46, ¶1, L3

10. Have I discovered I did not need to consider another's conception of God? – P46, ¶2, L1

11. Do I believe my own conception, however inadequate, is sufficient to make a start to effect a contact with God--provided I take the rest of these steps? – P46, ¶2, L3

12. Do I have my own conception of God? – P47, ¶1, L6

Assignment 11

13. Do I believe this is all I needed to commence spiritual growth and to effect my first conscious relation with God? – P47, ¶1, L6

2ND STEP CONSIDERATION

14. 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?) – P47, ¶2, L2

15. Do I believe that upon this simple cornerstone “a willingness to believe” a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built? – P47, ¶2, L6

16. Did I assume I could not make use of spiritual principles unless I accepted many things on faith which seemed difficult to believe? – P47, ¶3, L2

17. Do I believe there is a process here that can take me from a simple willingness, to belief, to faith? – P47, ¶3

18. Have I found myself handicapped by stubbornness, sensitiveness, and unreasoning prejudice? – P48, ¶1, L1

19. Faced with destruction from sex and “love” addiction (Step 1), have I become as open-minded on spiritual matters as I have tried to be on other questions? – P48, ¶1, L7

Assignment 11

20. In this respect, was sex and “love” the great persuader? – P48, ¶1, L9

21. Did it finally beat me into a state of reasonableness? – P48, ¶1, L10

22. In the past have I chosen to believe that my human intelligence was the last word? Wasn't that vain of me? – P49, ¶1, L3

23. Have I ever given the spiritual side of life a fair hearing? – P50, ¶1, L7

24. Do I believe I need to gain access to, and belief in, a power greater than myself? – P50, ¶3, L3

25. I may have had belief in, but have I ever had access to, this Power? – P50, ¶3, L4

26. Do I believe this Power in my case can accomplish the miraculous, and humanly impossible? – P50, ¶3, L4

Assignment 11

27. Do I believe I have to not only come to believe in a Power greater than myself but also to take a certain attitude (that we'll look at on page 55, ¶4) toward that Power, and to do certain simple things (the rest of the steps)? – P50, ¶4, L2

28. Do I believe I must wholeheartedly meet a few simple requirements (the 12 steps) to have a revolutionary change in my way of living and thinking? – P50, ¶4, L10

29. Am I confused and baffled by the seeming uselessness of my existence? – P51, ¶1, L1

30. Leaving aside the acting out problem, do I believe my lack of power was the underlying reason why life was so difficult? – P51, ¶1, L2

31. When hundreds of people are able to say that not just a belief in God, but the consciousness of the presence of God, is today the most important fact of their lives, does this present a powerful reason why I should have faith? – P51, ¶1, L5

SECOND HALF OF WE AGNOSTICS

THE SECOND STEP

THE SPIRITUAL MALADY

TOP OF PAGE 51 – PAGE 57

The Set Aside Prayer (Coming to Believe)

God, please set aside in me everything I think I know so that I might have an open mind and a new experience. Help me to see the truth about my need to come to believe in a power greater than myself.

1. In the realm of the spirit, has my mind been restrained by superstition, tradition, and all sorts of fixed ideas that I was raised with? – P51, ¶1, L8

2. When I see others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon God, do I have to stop doubting the power of God? Name the people you have seen. – P52, ¶3, L1

3. In the past have I stuck to the idea that self-sufficiency would solve my problems? – P52, ¶4, L5

THE SECOND STEP CHOICE

Consider each of the following questions on the next page in two ways.

- First, on each of the following questions, ask yourself “What are my prospects for the future in this area of my life if God is NOTHING, and DOES NOT exist: if all I have is what I’ve had in the past?”
- Next, go back through these questions and ask yourself, “What are my prospects for the future in this area of my life if God is EVERYTHING, and DOES exist?”

Assignment 12

4. Am I having trouble in personal relationships?

If God is nothing:

If God is everything:

5. Can I control my emotional nature (not my emotions, but how I experience the world deep down inside)?

If God is nothing:

If God is everything:

6. Am I prey (vulnerable) to misery and depression?

If God is nothing:

If God is everything:

Assignment 12

7. Can I make a living satisfying enough to keep me happy and sober?

If God is nothing:

If God is everything:

8. Do I have a feeling of uselessness (insignificance)?

If God is nothing:

If God is everything:

9. Am I full of fear?

If God is nothing:

If God is everything:

Assignment 12

10. Am I unhappy (empty, flat, lifeless, purposeless)?

If God is nothing:

If God is everything:

11. Do I seem unable to be of real help to other people?

If God is nothing:

If God is everything:

12. Do I believe these problems are **INSIDE** rather than **OUTSIDE** of myself? – P52, ¶2

13. Arrived at this point, am I squarely confronted with the question of faith? – P53, ¶3, L1

14. Do I believe in my own reasoning (my mind)? – P54, ¶1, L1

Assignment 12

15. Did I have confidence in my ability to think? Wasn't that but a sort of faith? – P54, ¶1, L2

16. Have I been faithful to the God of Reason (worshiping my mind)? – P54, ¶1, L4

17. Have I discovered that faith had been involved all the time? – P54, ¶1, L5

18. Have I worshipped (give examples): – P54, ¶1, L1

People? _____
Things? _____
Money? _____
Myself? _____

19. Have I worshipped the sunset, the sea or a flower? – P54, ¶1, L4

20. Have I loved something or somebody? – P54, ¶1, L6

21. How much did these feelings, these loves, these worships, have to do with pure reason? –
P54, ¶1, L7

Assignment 12

22. In one form or another had I been living by faith and little else? – P54, ¶1, L14

23. Do I believe I have been fooling myself, for deep down within every man, woman, and child is the fundamental idea of God? – P55, ¶2, L1

24. Has this idea been obscured by bad things that happened? By ego? By worship of other things? – P55, ¶2, L1

25. Have I seen that faith in some kind of God was a part of my make-up just as much as the feeling I have for a friend? – P55, ¶3, L1

26. Do I believe I will find the Great Reality deep down within me? – P55, ¶3, L5

27. Has the testimony of these people “in the meetings” helped sweep away prejudice?
...enabled me to think honestly?...encouraged me to search diligently within myself? –
P55, ¶4, L1

28. Do I believe the consciousness of my belief is sure to come? – P51, ¶1

Assignment 12

29. Who am I to say there is no God in a world that shows me there is? – P56, ¶3, L1

30. Do I now believe or am I willing to believe in a Power greater than myself? – P56, ¶5, L1

31. Do I believe when I draw near to Him, He will disclose Himself to me? – P57, ¶3, L1

HOW IT WORKS

THE THIRD STEP

PAGE 58 – PAGE 63

The Set Aside Prayer (My Decision)

God, please set aside in me everything I think I know so that I might have an open mind and a new experience. Help me to see the truth about the failure of my life run on self-will and my decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God.

1. Have I rarely seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed the directions laid out in the Big Book? – P58, ¶1, L1

2. Do I believe those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program? Do I? – P58, ¶1, L1

3. Have I seen from pages 23–43 that, where sex and “love” are concerned, I’m constitutionally incapable of being honest with myself? – P58, ¶1, L5

4. Have I decided I want what they have and am willing to go to any length to get it? – P58, ¶2, L3

5. Am I ready to take these proven steps? – P58, ¶2, L5

Assignment 13

6. Am I convinced of these 3 pertinent ideas? – P60, ¶2, L1

That I am, whether acting out or not, a sex and “love” addict and cannot manage my own life (Step 1)?

That probably no human power can relieve my sex and “love” addiction?

That God can and will if He is sought (Step 2)?

7. Am I convinced that my life run on self-will can hardly be a success? – P60, ¶4, L1

8. What does a successful life look like to me?

9. On the basis of running my life on my will, am I almost always in collision with something or somebody even though my motives are good?

10. Am I like an actor who wants to run the whole show? – P60, ¶4, L6

11. When life doesn't treat me right, do I decide to exert myself more? – P61, ¶1, L2

Assignment 13

12. Do I become still more demanding or gracious, doing whatever I need to do to get what I want? – P61, ¶1, L3

13. Admitting I may be somewhat at fault, am I sure that other people are more to blame? – P61, ¶1, L6

14. Am I really a self-seeker even when trying to be kind?

15. Have I been a victim of the delusion that I can wrestle (force) satisfaction and happiness out of this world if I only manage well? – P61, ¶1, L10

16. Am I, even in my best moments, a producer of confusion rather than harmony? – P61, ¶1, L16

17. Am I self-centered? (think of myself too often) – P61, ¶2, L1

18. Do I believe selfishness and self-centeredness are the root of my troubles? – P62, ¶1, L1

Assignment 13

19. Am I driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity? – P62, ¶1, L2

20. Have I found that at some time in the past I made decisions based on self which later placed me in a position to be hurt? – P62, ¶1, L6

21. Do I believe my troubles are basically of my own making? They arise out of myself. – P62, ¶2, L1

22. Am I an extreme example of self-will run riot even though I don't think so? – P62, ¶2, L3

23. Do I believe that, above everything, I must be rid of selfishness, or it will kill me? – P62, ¶2, L4

24. Do I believe God makes that possible? – P62, ¶2, L6

25. Do I believe there is no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid? – P62, ¶2, L7

Assignment 13

26. Do I have to have God's help? – P62, ¶2, L12

27. Do I have to decide to quit playing God? – P62, ¶3, L2

28. Did playing God work? – P62, ¶3, L2

The following is taken from the Big Book and phrased in the first person. Read this out loud to someone each day for a week, and then decide if:

- a.) It applies to you.
- b.) You are ready to quit living like this.
- c.) You are ready to accept living on God's terms.

The first requirement for Step Three is that I be convinced that my life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis I am almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though my motives are good. I try to live by self-propulsion. I am like an actor who wants to run the whole show; I am forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in my own way. If my arrangements would only stay put, if only people would do as I wished, the show would be great. Everybody, including myself, would be pleased. Life would be wonderful. In trying to make these arrangements I may sometimes be quite virtuous. I may be kind, considerate, patient, generous; even modest and self-sacrificing. On the other hand, I may be mean, egotistical, selfish and dishonest. But, as with most humans, I am more likely to have varied traits.

What usually happens? The show doesn't come off very well. I begin to think life doesn't treat me right. I decide to exert myself more. I become, on the next occasion, still more demanding or gracious, as the case may be. Still the play does not suit me. Admitting I may be somewhat at fault, I am sure that other people are more to blame. I become angry, indignant, self-pitying. What is my basic trouble? Am I not really a self-seeker even when trying to be kind? Am I not a victim of the delusion that I can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this world if I only manage well? Is it not evident to all the rest of the players that these are the things I want? And do not my actions make each of them wish to retaliate, snatching all they can get out of the show? Am I not, even in my best moments, a producer of confusion rather than harmony?

I am self-centered - ego-centric, as people like to call it nowadays. I am like the retired businessman who lolls in the Florida sunshine in the winter complaining of the sad state of the

Assignment 13

nation; the minister who sighs over the sins of the twentieth century; politicians and reformers who are sure all would be Utopia if the rest of the world would only behave; the outlaw safe cracker who thinks society has wronged him; and the sex and “love” addict who has lost all and is locked up. Whatever my protestations, am I not concerned with myself, my resentments, and my self-pity?

Selfishness - self-centeredness! That, I think, is the root of my troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, I step on the toes of my fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt me, seemingly without provocation, but I invariably find that at some time in the past I have made decisions based on self which later placed me in a position to be hurt.

So, my troubles, I think, are basically of my own making. They arise out of myself, and I am an extreme example of self-will run riot, though I usually don't think so. Above everything, I, as a sex and “love” addict, must be rid of this selfishness. I must, or it will kill me! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid. I had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but I could not live up to them even though I would have liked to. Neither could I reduce my self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on my own power. I have to have God's help.

This is the how and the why of it. First of all, I have to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next, I will decide that hereafter in this drama of life, God is going to be my Director. He is the Principal; I am His agent. He is the Father, and I am His child. Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which I will pass to freedom.

When I sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. I have a new Employer. Being all-powerful, He will provide what I need, if I keep close to Him and perform His work well. Established on such a footing I'll become less and less interested in myself, my little plans and designs. More and more, I will become interested in seeing what I can contribute to life. As I feel new power flow in, as I enjoy peace of mind, as I discover I can face life successfully, as I become conscious of His presence, I begin to lose my fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. I will be reborn.

I am now at Step Three. I said to my Maker, as I understood Him: "God, I offer myself to Thee — to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!" I thought well before taking this step, making sure I was ready; that I could at last abandon myself utterly to Him.

I'll find it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person, such as another member of the program who has done this work or a spiritual advisor. But it is better to meet God alone than with one who might misunderstand. The wording was, of course, quite optional so long as I expressed the idea, voicing it without reservation. This was only a beginning, though if honestly and humbly made, an effect, sometimes a very great one, will be felt at once.

Assignment 13

The book gives us 3 aspects of a relationship with God for consideration:

DIRECTOR / ACTOR: A director runs the show; an actor listens to direction – P62, ¶3, L3

29. Have I failed in directing my life on my own power? Am I ready to make the decision that hereafter God will direct my life?

PRINCIPAL / AGENT: An agent represents the principal (or employer) and acts as the principal would have them act. – P62, ¶3, L4

30. Have I failed to be the person I want myself to be? Have I failed to make others the way I need them to be? Am I ready to make the decision that hereafter I will represent what God would have me be?

FATHER / CHILD: A child trusts that their father can provide what they're incapable of providing on their own – P62, ¶3, L5

31. On my own, have I failed to provide what I need to be ok? Am I ready to make the decision that hereafter I will trust that God will provide what I need?

32. Do I believe that these ideas are good and that this concept will be the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which I will pass to freedom? – P62, ¶3, L6

CONSIDERATION:

Step Two talked about my conception of God (my old ideas of God).

The Third Step is my decision to grow towards a new concept or “new idea” of a God-reliant way of life.

If you are ready, say the **Third Step Prayer** on your knees **honestly, humbly, sincerely and without reservation** (Page 63, ¶2):

"God, I offer myself to Thee — to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!"

Step Three Promises (Page 63, ¶1)

When we sincerely take such a position (the position of God being our director, principal, and father and us being His actors, agents, and children) ...

- Remarkable things will follow.
- We will have a new employer.
- Being all-powerful, He will provide what we need if we keep close to Him and perform His work well.
- We will become less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs.
- More and more we will become interested in seeing what we can contribute to life.
- We will feel new power flow in.
- We will enjoy peace of mind.
- We will discover that we can face life successfully.
- We will become conscious of His presence.
- We will begin to lose our fear of today, tomorrow, or the hereafter.
- We will be reborn.

Summary of Step Three:

There is an old proverb from India which illustrates the point of the Third Step well. Two men were walking down an unpaved road and were barefoot. The road was covered with small rocks which hurt their bare feet when they stepped on them. One of the men said to the other, "This journey would be much easier on our feet if this road was paved with leather." The wiser of the two men replied, "Yes, this is true, but we could get the same effect by wearing a pair of shoes." Sex and "love" addicts wish to pave the road with leather, so they don't need to wear shoes. The Twelve Steps are designed to become our shoes. The steps help us change in order to fit into the world as it is, rather than continuing to try to get the world to change so that we can be happy.

The following joke illustrates the rest of Step Three:

Question: Three bullfrogs are sitting on a log. One bullfrog makes a decision to jump in the pond. How many are left?

Answer: Three. The bullfrog only made a decision; he hasn't done anything yet.

The way we implement the decision we made in Step Three is to complete steps four through nine.