

## STEP ELEVEN

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

Step Eleven is about nurturing and improving our relationship with the Higher Power of our understanding and increasing our spiritual awareness. Many of us have found that when we pray for knowledge of God's will for us, we discover the right actions to take and the right words to say. Like Steps Ten and Twelve, the Eleventh Step is one we don't have to wait to work.

One of the challenges of the Eleventh Step is learning how to understand the difference between God's will and self-will. We need only ask for our Higher Power's guidance and wisdom to be assured that our own desires are not the focus. The more we let go of our wish list, the more we allow our Higher Power to work in our lives. As we experience the power of prayer and meditation in our lives, our awareness grows stronger and our faith deepens.

### Getting Started:

- Read "Step Eleven" in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Step Eleven with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words *prayer*, *meditation*, and *spiritual*; write out the definitions that you find to be significant, and write what each word means to you.

### Prayer

Some of us begin and end our day thanking our Higher Power for another day clean and sober. Others use formal prayers from recovery literature, organized religion, or our spiritual practice. Many talk directly from our hearts, letting God know our innermost thoughts and feelings. Any method we choose will yield positive results. Over time, we usually find that communication with our Higher Power becomes easier and allows for a deeper relationship to develop.

In addition to praying for knowledge of God's will for us, we also, pray for the "power to carry that out." We may become aware of God's will, but due to many factors, we may feel unable to follow through. In order to successfully work the Eleventh Step, it becomes necessary to practice the spiritual principle of faith and trust God's will in our daily life. If we focus on being grateful for the things that are good in our lives, the desire to carry out God's will becomes easier.

- What method(s) of prayer have I tried?
- Which, if any, works best for me?
- Have I felt a connection to my Higher Power?
- Have I found that any of my prayers have been answered? (Such as: relief from the obsession to use, or help in taking the next right action?)

- Have I been able to establish a daily practice of prayer?
- If not, is there anything I might do to help me integrate prayer more easily into my life?

## **Meditation**

Just as prayer is a form of talking to God, meditation is a form of listening to God. Meditation techniques are designed to help us develop the ability to be aware of our Higher Power. Some prefer guided meditations, others practice moving meditations, still others prefer simple breathing techniques. No matter which form of meditation we perform, the process of quieting the mind further develops our awareness and our connection to our Higher Power.

Some meditation methods suggest that we pay attention to our breath, as a way of quieting our mind. For some of us, repeating a phrase of a spiritual nature, such as “Let go and let God,” and staying focused on the words, can help calm our mind. When our minds wander, as they invariably will, we gently and lovingly bring them back into focus. With all techniques, there tends to be a constant process of refocusing our awareness when it becomes distracted. With regular practice, the ability to focus and maintain our awareness increases. As we calm our minds, our intuition grows; serenity and solutions come to us.

- Which, if any, meditation techniques have worked for me? How have they worked?
- Have I made progress toward developing a regular meditation practice?
- Have I noticed any changes in my ability to meditate since entering recovery?
- In what ways, if any, have I, or my life changed, as a result of meditation?

As we improve our ability to stay in conscious contact with our Higher Power, we develop a greater understanding of self-love, inner peace, true joy and happiness. We intuitively know what to do in the moment; our guidance comes from our Higher Power. If we maintain this connection, we’ll remain in harmony with God’s will for us.

- Have I experienced moments of conscious contact with my Higher Power?
- How do I know when I’ve achieved a conscious contact with my Higher Power?
- What factors help me do this?
- What gets in the way of my attaining a conscious contact with God?
- How do I know God’s will for me? Do I always know? Sometimes know? Never know?
- Is anything blocking me from carrying out God’s will?
- How can I help myself carry out my Higher Power’s will for me in all areas of my life?

Step Eleven allows us the strength and courage to incorporate the program in all aspects of our lives. We’re now able to be of help and service to others, which leads us to **STEP TWELVE**.