

**MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS**

**12 STEP WORKBOOK**

**STEPS 1 – 7**

**CONFERENCE APPROVED DRAFT**

## STEP ONE

### **We Admitted We Were Powerless Over Marijuana And That Our Lives Had Become Unmanageable.**

With the First Step we begin the recovery process. Working this step enables us to move forward through the Twelve Steps of Marijuana Anonymous. We may now find it useful to carefully examine some of our old beliefs, ideas, thoughts, and behaviors.

Step One is about honesty, our most helpful ally to a successful Step One. With the practice of this principle we can face the reality of our addiction.

Step One is admitting that we are powerless over our marijuana use—and that our lives have become unmanageable. . We suggest exploring the following questions, and writing out your answers, allowing for reflection, discovery, and discussion with your sponsor.

#### **Getting Started:**

- Begin reading *LIFE WITH HOPE* through “**Step One**”. Note passages that are meaningful to you and statements or words that you don’t understand.
- Look up dictionary definitions of the words you didn’t understand.
- Look up the words *powerless* and *unmanageable* in the dictionary, and then write what these words mean to you. Review Step One with your sponsor, or a trusted fellow MA member.

#### **Write A History Of Your Marijuana Use:**

Write a history of your marijuana use. Detail your experiences. Ask yourself the following:

- What early life experiences led me to using?
- How did I feel the first time I used?
- What were my feelings over time as I continued to use?
- Did marijuana turn on me, and if so, when?
- Describe your life during your last 60 days of using.
- What brought me to Marijuana Anonymous?

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**Answer the following questions and review them with your sponsor:**

### **Recall Experiences In Which You Were Powerless Over Your Marijuana Use.**

- How did I try to control my using?
- How did my marijuana use keep me from realizing my potential?
- How did my marijuana use keep me from doing what I wanted to do with my life?
- Do I think I can control other people, places and things?
- Where in my life am I powerless?
- Where in my life do I have power?

### **Explain How Your Life Is *Unmanageable*.**

- Did I make deals with myself that I was unable to keep?
- What are some triggers that cause me to crave marijuana?
- Have I ever experienced confusion, paranoia, and fear associated with my using?
- Was I withdrawn and isolated?
- Was I brought to the depths of despair and hopelessness?
- How was my life unmanageable when I was using? How is it unmanageable today?

### **Denial, Surrender, Honesty and Acceptance.**

- How have I been living “the fantasy of functionality?”
- Am I done with the idea of being able to use again?
- Do I blame the world or others for my problems?
- What does surrender mean to me?
- Has my way of life been working for me?
- Am I still looking for a way to control my using?
- Am I ready to admit that I am powerless over marijuana and that my life has become unmanageable?

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Some say that Step One is the only step we are asked to work “perfectly.” Others say we need only work the *first half* of the step “perfectly.” We do that when we admit, accept and surrender to the fact that we are powerless over marijuana. When we can do that, and accept that our lives have become unmanageable, we are ready for **STEP TWO.**

## **STEP TWO**

### **Came To Believe That A Power Greater Than Ourselves Could Restore Us To Sanity.**

Step Two is about open-mindedness, change and hope. We consider trusting A power greater than ourselves, (and greater than our obsession with marijuana), that can help us deal with everyday life. We define insanity as repeating the same behaviors over and over again, while expecting different results.

It is not necessary to acquire a major God Consciousness to be able to cease using. All we need is to maintain an open mind and a hopeful heart. Higher Power means different things to different people. There is room in Marijuana Anonymous for all beliefs, or none. Each of us finds a Power that works for us. Some of us draw strength and support from the fellowship. We begin to see that a power greater than ourselves could do for us what we could never do alone.

#### **Getting started:**

- Read “Step Two” in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Step Two with your sponsor, or a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words believe, restore, and sanity in the dictionary and then write what the words mean to you.
- What does a Higher Power mean to you?

The following questions are categorized for your convenience.

#### **Recall Experiences Of Insanity.**

- Give some examples of repeating the same behaviors over and over again and expecting different results.
- Do I have thoughts of using again someday, even though I need or wish to stop using? Explain.

#### **Examine Beliefs Of A Power Greater Than Ourselves.**

- What is my concept of a Power greater than myself?
- Can I become open-minded to a new concept of a Power that works for me?
- How can I focus on using a Higher Power to benefit my recovery?

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### **Becoming Open-Minded.**

- Has lack of open mindedness contributed to my reaching a bottom?
- Am I ready to accept and/or choose a Power greater than myself that is positive, powerful and with which I am comfortable?
- Do I believe a Higher Power can do for me what I could not do alone?

Discuss your answers with your sponsor, **or a trusted fellow MA member.**

Welcome to **STEP THREE . . .**

## **STEP THREE**

### **Made A Decision To Turn Our Will And Our Lives Over To The Care Of God, As We Understood God.**

In Step Two we examined our concept of a Higher Power. The program of recovery can work for anyone who can accept a power greater than him or herself.

Step Three doesn't say, "We turned our will and our lives over," rather, it suggests that we "*made a decision*" to do so. The idea of turning our will and life over to the care of a Higher Power can seem impossible to some of us. It can be done gradually, over time. This is possible when we become willing and have faith. What is important is that we start the process.

By staying in the present, we release the past and let go of the future. Doing so helps us to relinquish our self-will. Many of us found that simply making this decision opened us up to a spiritual connection. This decision was an act of faith in and of itself.

For some of us, our faith started to grow as a direct result of our abstinence from marijuana. Others of us had to "act as if." We find that praying for willingness often helps.

By taking the next right action we release our will. In Step Three we examine how to use the help of a Higher Power to accomplish that. We get into action.

#### **Getting Started:**

- Read "Step Three" in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Step Three with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words decision, will, acceptance, and faith; write out the definitions that you find to be significant, and write what each word means to you.

#### **Review the Third Step prayer on page 13 of LWH.**

- What, if anything, about this prayer works for you?
- What, if anything, about this prayer do you resist?
- Write your own version of this prayer, using as little or as much of the original as you choose.

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### **Willingness/ Willfulness.**

- What does willingness mean to me?
- How does self-will affect my life?
- Am I willing to be open to the idea of surrendering my will to the care of a Higher Power? What stands in the way of my willingness, if anything?
- Do I try to control people, places, and things? Do I blame myself when I am not successful at doing so?
- Have I tried to stop using marijuana through self-will? Was I successful? If not, why do I think that is?

### **Understanding the Care of a Higher Power.**

- Do I have faith that my Higher Power can relieve my obsession with marijuana? If not, do I have the willingness to “act as if” a Higher Power could do so?
- Where in my life do I believe my Higher Power can take care of me? Where, if anywhere, do I feel my Higher Power cannot take care of me?
- Where in my life right now do I feel my Higher Power is taking care of me?
- What does turning my will and my life over to the care of a Higher Power mean to me?
- What fears do I have about turning my will and life over to the care of my Higher Power?

**Discuss your answers with your sponsor, or a trusted fellow MA member.**

Welcome to **STEP FOUR** . . .

## STEP FOUR

### **Made a Searching and Fearless Moral Inventory of Ourselves**

Now that we've been honest enough to take Step 1, open minded enough to take Step 2 and willing enough to take Step 3, we are ready for Step 4. Before we start this step, it is important to ask what it is that we want from recovery.

Step 4 does take courage. It begins the process of learning who we are. Many of us feared beginning this step, but once we did the work, we found it was less difficult than we had imagined. The inventory is a detailed description of our character challenges, or defects of character, removed of judgment. Remember, it is an inventory; no action other than writing is required.

While we look at our character challenges and wrongs in Step 4, many of us found it helpful to examine our character assets as well. We encourage you to look at and list all aspects of your character in this Step. As you work in this process you will likely gain a greater understanding and acceptance of the person you have been, and see the potential of the person you are becoming.

Taking this inventory is not a thinking exercise, it's a writing exercise. As you work on your inventory, try not to leave anything out because of shame, fear or embarrassment. What you record is between you, your Higher Power, and your sponsor or other trusted person with whom you share this Step. We find that the more thorough and honest we are, the better results we get from this Step. Remember, we are only as sick as our secrets. Ask your Higher Power for help every time you sit down to write. There is no rush. We have found the rewards to be substantial.

### ***Getting Started***

The inventory suggested in LWH (and this workbook) is really four separate inventories: resentments, fears, sexual history, and a final inventory to cover anything that might have been missed in the first three, including our assets. Each inventory is unique, and it is suggested that you do them one at a time, in the order set out below. Included are templates that might be helpful when doing this Step; we suggest that you make several copies of each before beginning, if you choose to use them.

These inventories may be handwritten or done on computer. If writing by hand, have plenty of paper, or a notebook, and a quiet place to work. For many of us, writing by hand is more intuitive and less from reasoned thinking, which is best avoided here. Some find the use of a computer to be of assistance in doing this work. Whatever our preference, the reward is release from the past and freedom from the pain that has enslaved us.

Before beginning this inventory we recommend an exercise to facilitate openness and willingness. For many of us, this means a prayer to a higher power. Here's an example:

*Higher Power would you please bring to mind all of my resentments (fears, memories of sexual misconduct, etc.) that I need to look at in this inventory.*

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The exact words we say aren't as important as saying the words we choose with a spirit of openness. Many of us have found that saying the prayer out loud is helpful. If we just relax and ask for help, it's amazing how freely the information we need to look at will flow onto the paper.

Three things to remember: 1) Stay focused. 2) Pray. 3) Keep writing!

We are ready to begin.

### **The Resentment Inventory**

We usually begin with the resentment inventory, which is generally divided into four columns. It is strongly suggested that we complete one column at a time, from top to bottom (going onto several sheets if necessary,) before beginning the next column. In other words, we list all of the people, principles, and institutions that we resent before looking at anything in the 2nd column (the cause,) leaving enough room to fill in each cause of our resentments. Experience shows that when we write more than one column at a time, the process becomes too confusing. Once we have completed our first column, we move on, remembering that we can always go back and make additions as other people, principals, and institutions towards which we hold resentments come to mind.

In the second column, for each person / principal / institution in column one, we write down the cause or causes for each resentment. For example:

<b>COLUMN 1</b>	<b>COLUMN 2</b>
I'm resentful at:	The Cause (Why I'm Angry)
Mom	put too much pressure on me enabled my addiction by looking the other way; embarrassed me in front of my friends
Dad	belittled me; made me feel like I wasn't good enough; didn't defend me with Uncle Joe

In column three, we identify how the "causes" in column two impacted our well-being, what part of us was hurt or threatened. Examples:

<b>COLUMN 1</b>	<b>COLUMN 2</b>	<b>COLUMN 3</b>
Mom	Too much pressure	Self-esteem
	Enabled	Self-esteem, security, ambitions
	Embarrassed	Self-esteem, personal relationships

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Again, note that for each column 2 cause, there can be more than one area affected. It is important to be thorough (which is one of the reasons why it is recommended that we attempt to finish each column before starting the next.) Of course, if we think of things we've forgotten that belong in a previous column, by all means we fill in those blanks. But again, we find it best to work on one column at a time and to be as exhaustive as possible.

In the fourth column we identify our part in each resentment. This means that we look for what we did to create or aggravate the situations described in the earlier column. Where were we to blame? Sometimes this is obvious: when we resent a spouse or partner for being jealous, for example, we might come to understand fairly easily how our actions may have led to our partner's feelings. Other times, our part may be more difficult to identify. Perhaps our anger at someone at work is completely understandable, based upon how they have treated us. In such a case, we may find that where we have failed is in our refusal to forgive: we have allowed the resentment to fester and grow, perhaps even gaining enjoyment out of it! Sometimes we rack our brains and cannot find our part in the resentment. This is where a sponsor's help can prove invaluable.

Whenever you get stuck, take a break. These inventories take most of us weeks to complete--some of us have spent much longer, though such delay is not usually necessary. The sooner we begin, and the more we do each day, the sooner we will be finished. We find that when we return to working on our inventory after a break of more than a few minutes, it's a good idea to perform the willingness exercise (or prayer) again.

Once we have finished the fourth column of our resentment inventory, we look over our worksheet for things we may have missed or where we could have been more thorough.

We are now ready for the fear inventory.

### **The Fear Inventory**

The fear inventory is a lot like the resentment inventory, except that here, the focus is on our fears. We list each fear in the first column. When we have written out all of our fears to the best of our ability, we explore the cause or causes of our fears in the second column. In the third column, we write how each fear affects our lives today. In the fourth column, we write down our part, if any.

<b>COLUMN 1</b>	<b>COLUMN 2</b>	<b>COLUMN 3</b>	<b>COLUMN 4</b>
Fear of Heights	My brother pushed me off the second floor balcony	Affects my ability to fly; my ambition to be a pilot	I bullied my brother

We then ask our Higher Power to remove the fear. We do this for each individual fear.

“Higher Power please remove my fear of \_\_\_\_\_ and direct my attention towards what you would have me be.”

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Again, we should remember to take breaks, and to take advantage of whatever prayers, tools or techniques that we have found that help us to be more willing, honest and open minded. For years, we have run away from ourselves with marijuana. Even without the marijuana, our tendency is to hide the truth rather than to face it. But if we are to grow as individuals, if we are to truly deal with this disease of marijuana addiction, we must face each of our fears, so that we can work through them. Remember always that we will not be working through them alone.

Once we have conquered the fear inventory, we are ready for the sex inventory.

### **The Sex Inventory**

We begin by listing each of our sexual partners. In the second column, we ask ourselves how we behaved by answering these questions: Did we harm that person? Did we use them, or take advantage of them? As always, we try to be as honest and thorough as we can. Remember that we are not concerned here with what others may have done to us. If we have a resentment against someone because of something done to us, then we add them to our resentment inventory.

In the third column, we describe what part of us was hurt or threatened. What part of us caused the harm? Where was I selfish, dishonest, inconsiderate, jealous, suspicious or bitter?

In the fourth column, we write down where we were at fault. In the fifth column we describe what we could have done instead. Again, we always try to remember to be thoroughly honest every step of the way.

<b>COLUMN 1</b>	<b>COLUMN 2</b>	<b>COLUMN 3</b>	<b>COLUMN 4</b>	<b>COLUMN 5</b>
Pat	Yes	Selfish, jealous	Made a scene; didn't listen	Talked it out calmly; paid more attention
Chris	No			
Jan	Yes	Dishonest, jealous	Lied	Told the truth



# RESENTMENTS

	COLUMN 1 <b>I'm RESENTFUL at:</b>	COLUMN 2 <b>The Cause:</b>	COLUMN 3	COL. 4
			Self Esteem	Security
			Ambitions	Personal Relationships
			Sex Relations	Selfish
			Dishonest	Self-seeking
			Frightened	
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				

### Instructions for Completion

### REVIEW OF OUR FEARS

**Complete column 1 from top to bottom before proceeding to the next column.**

Column 1 *We list our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them.*

Column 2 *We asked ourselves why we are afraid.*

Column 3 *How does our fear affect our lives today?*

Column 4 *What was our part, if any?*

COLUMN 1

COLUMN 2

COLUMN 3

COLUMN 4

	<b>I'm fearful of:</b>	<b>Cause of my fear?</b>	<b>How does the fear affect my life?</b>	<b>What was my part, if any?</b>
<b>1</b>				
<b>2</b>				
<b>3</b>				
<b>4</b>				
<b>5</b>				
<b>6</b>				
<b>7</b>				
<b>8</b>				

# FEARS

COLUMN 1

COLUMN 2

COLUMN 3

COLUMN 4

	<b>I'm fearful of:</b>	<b>Cause of my fear?</b>	<b>How does the fear affect my life?</b>	<b>What was my part, if any?</b>
<b>9</b>				
<b>10</b>				
<b>11</b>				
<b>12</b>				
<b>13</b>				
<b>14</b>				
<b>15</b>				
<b>16</b>				
<b>17</b>				
<b>18</b>				





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### Secrets and Other Issues

We may find that there are instances where we have harmed people, lied, cheated or stole. We may have secrets that we have yet to uncover. We list them now.

### Assets

At this point, many of us have found that it is also important that we take a look at the things that we've done right. We look to see where we have had a positive impact on ourselves and others. We do this so that we might have a more complete picture of ourselves. We also want to know those character traits and behaviors that we wish to foster in our lives.

We ask ourselves: what qualities do I have that I like?

We suggest looking over everything one more time, asking our Higher Power to help us find anything important we might have missed. If we have been exhaustive, if we have searched our hearts and souls, we may feel a sense of relief having completed this step.

We are now ready for **STEP FIVE**.

## STEP FIVE

**Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

Step Five requires courage and rigorous honesty. This Step continues the process begun in Step Four, uncovering things about ourselves of which we might not have been aware, or were unwilling to face. Admitting what we find to our Higher Power, to ourselves and to another human being helps us to overcome our feelings of shame, guilt and embarrassment that may have kept us from realizing our true potential.

By the time we reach Step Five, many of us know with whom we will be sharing our Fourth Step inventory. Most commonly that person is a sponsor we have already chosen.

However, it's not imperative that you share your Fifth Step with your sponsor. *Life With Hope* suggests that a spiritual advisor or even a total stranger can hear your Fifth Step. (We have found it to be highly beneficial if the person has at least some understanding of the Twelve Step philosophy.)

The Fifth Step is about discovering patterns resulting from our resentments, fears and selfishness. By identifying and sharing them we find we can move beyond them.

### **Getting Started:**

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

### **Trust:**

- Do I have a lack of trust in others or myself?
- What factors, if any, contribute to my lack of trust?

### **Humility:**

- What excuses, if any, interfere with my ability to share my inventory?
- Is there anything blocking me from having the courage to take this step?

Many of us found it helpful to pray for trust, humility, and courage.

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**We now meet with our sponsor or spiritual advisor to share our fourth step inventories.**

**After Sharing:**

- Upon conclusion of sharing our inventories, some of us have found it helpful to spend time alone in quiet reflection.
- If we discover any additional resentments, fears or secrets we share them with our sponsor or spiritual advisor at this time.

For many of us, after completing this step the wreckage of our past becomes a resource from which we can learn and grow. Many of us experience a new sense of empowerment, self-acceptance, integrity, and humility.

We are now ready to move on to **STEP SIX**.

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### **Notes for the Sponsor for Step Five:**

Each sponsor develops their own approach to working with sponsees. That approach may vary from sponsee to sponsee and is almost certain to change over time.

Even without prior expertise, most sponsors are able to note patterns that are revealed by listening without judgment and keeping an open heart and mind.

Some of us may help our sponsees prepare a preliminary list of those they might owe an amends; others might leave that to the sponsees themselves. Likewise, some sponsors apply the same process to character defects. Still others do not include this process at all in the Fifth Step.

After a sponsee has shared their list, many sponsors have found it helpful to ask one final time if there are any other secrets that haven't been revealed or didn't fit under any other category. This gentle prompting can help the sponsee dredge out any lingering "skeletons in the closet."

As a sponsor you may find that while relief is a frequent result of taking this Step, anxiety and discomfort may also result from unearthing old memories and feelings. Sponsees may want to run away from what they've found. They may be tempted to avoid us because we "know too much." You may wish to help them resist these urges and turn to the experience of other addicts who are likely to reassure them with their own stories of struggle along this path.

The Fifth Step work that a sponsor and sponsee complete together is effective and often transformative. It may, however, also reveal certain issues or circumstances that the sponsor does not feel capable of handling. In most cases, the sponsor is not a qualified therapist. The sponsor may advise the sponsee to seek appropriate professional help such as a licensed counselor, a legal advisor, or a doctor. In some cases, even the sponsor may wish to seek outside advice, being mindful not to breach the special trust formed in the sponsor-sponsee relationship.

Many of us have found that a great resource in working with a sponsee is our own sponsor; always being careful to maintain the confidentiality of our sponsee.

## **STEP SIX**

**Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**

Having completed Steps Four and Five, we now carry an awareness of the harm we have done to others and ourselves with more clarity and detail than ever before. In the patterns that emerged while sharing these details fully and openly for the first time, we have begun to recognize our defects of character.

Step Six says simply that we “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character”. This step requires that we practice the spiritual principles of willingness and faith. We need to be willing to let our Higher Power remove our defects of character and to have faith that when we are ready to let go, our Higher Power will be there to help us. Some defects of character we cannot wait to get rid of, while others we do not know how we can do without. This movement towards the new and unknown can be exciting and scary. On the one hand, we envision ourselves becoming more like how we always wanted to be and cannot wait to move on to the Seventh Step. On the other hand, we cannot imagine entirely letting go of some of our character traits, thus moving into an entirely new way of being.

### **Getting Started:**

- Read “**Step Six**” in *LIFE WITH HOPE*.
- Review Step Six with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words defect and willing; write out the definitions that you find to be significant, and write what the words mean to you.
- Review the word faith (from Step Three). Has your concept changed at all?

### **Willingness**

- List examples of times when you practiced the spiritual principle of willingness? What were the results?
- Do I have character defects that I can’t wait to get rid of?
- Do I have character defects that I can’t imagine living without?

## **Faith:**

We can practice the same faith we used to stop using marijuana, in letting go of our character defects. We become willing to surrender our character defects.

- List examples of times when you practiced the spiritual principle of faith. What were the results?
- Is there anything blocking me from having the courage to take this step?
- If my Higher Power is going to do all this for me, what's my job?

## **Character Defects:**

Many of us bristled at the words “character defect”. While we didn't claim to be perfect, the idea of having “defects” still made us think less of ourselves. Some of us use an alternative term - “character challenges,” as it's more encouraging and suggests that we can overcome them. With our diligence, our sponsor's guidance, and HP's help, many of us have found that we can indeed eventually lessen, or free ourselves of many of the traits that no longer serve us. The changes begin, as long as we are willing and have faith. By writing, sharing, and praying, we increase our readiness to let go of these character defects.

- What are my character defects? Write down each defect and give a brief description of it.
- What are some examples of situations in which I acted on my defects?
- How do my defects effect myself and others?
- Do I have defects that I know I am attached to?
- Do I have defects that I think cannot be removed?
- What do I think would happen if these defects were removed?
- What might I do in place of acting on these defects?
- Do I trust my Higher Power to do what is best for me?
- What would my life look like if each character defect were entirely removed?

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Character defects are often rooted in normal and desirable human traits that have been allowed to run riot during our active addiction. There is transformation available in examining these themes, for it is in the shadows of our worst traits that we may discover our greatest assets.

- Can I connect any of my character defects to an underlying strength?
- What might happen if I was left with only the strength, but not the character defect that grew from it?

It is widely acknowledged that working the sixth step is an ongoing, even life-long process. Many of us have experienced the dramatic lifting of some of our character defects, but few of us found that all of our defects were lifted at once, so we needed to accept that being ready also meant *staying* ready. This approach to the sixth step has been described as embracing a life-long 'sixth step attitude': being constantly open to discovering our defects and surrendering them to a higher power.

By practicing Step Six, we acquire the humility needed to take **STEP SEVEN**.

## **STEP SEVEN**

### **Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.**

The spiritual principle of Step 7 is Humility. In this Step we let go of our ego and humbly submit to a power greater than ourselves so that our shortcomings may be removed.

#### **Getting Started:**

- Read “**Step Seven**” in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Steps Six and Seven with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words: humility and surrender; write out the definitions that you find to be significant, and write what each word means to you.

#### **Humility:**

Humility is needed to calmly ask for help and let go. We take the action and leave the results of our request to our Higher Power. Where humility once represented weakness to many of us it now begins to hold the key to serenity.

- How do I feel about the idea of practicing humility?
- How does humility affect my recovery?
- What can I do to practice humility in this step and in my daily life?

#### **Surrender:**

Having faith that our Higher Power knows what’s right for us requires a complete surrender. We need to get out of the way , and allow the changes in our thinking and behaviors to happen.

- How do I feel about surrendering and letting my Higher Power work in my life?
- Am I willing to let go and surrender my character defects to my Higher Power?

## **Taking Action:**

Some form of prayer is customary when we ask our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings, but the spiritual path may vary. Some of us write our own prayer and keep it between our Higher Power and ourselves. Others share the experience with our sponsors and others still invite members of our sponsorship “family tree” to share in the ritual. How we ask our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings is a personal choice. It is suggested that we make the choice with help from our sponsor or spiritual advisor.

This seemingly simple act of prayer gives our Higher Power permission to work in our lives. When something happens to trigger our character defects, we are more apt to recognize it and have an opportunity to seek help from our Higher Power.

- How will I ask my Higher Power to remove my shortcomings?
- Do I choose to share the experience with my sponsor and other trusted members of the fellowship?
- Do I believe that my Higher Power will remove my shortcomings?

## **Progress Not Perfection**

We often hear the phrase “progress, not perfection. Sometimes we make a little progress, and sometimes a lot. Any progress helps build the foundation for our recovery. When we strive for perfection, our ego gets in the way of letting our Higher Power into our recovery. It’s important to take a step back. Looking at the progress we’ve made gives us an opportunity to see how much better our lives have become and how much our Higher Power has played a part; this is our recovery in action.

- How do I practice perfection in my life?
- How can I learn to apply spiritual principles and the tools of recovery in situations when I attempt perfection?
- What will I do when a character defect reoccurs in my life after I’ve asked my higher power to remove it?

As we ask our Higher Power to remove our character defects, we ask to transform them into new useful patterns of thinking and behaving. When we ask humbly, we discover that our Higher Power can remove our imperfections and help us gain self-forgiveness.

We are now ready to take **STEP EIGHT**.