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WISDOM OF THE TWELVE STEPS: 4th STEP

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This distance learning course package was developed for CEU Matrix by David W. Earle, LPC. It is based on information found in "Wisdom of the Twelve Steps: 4th Step Workbook" (copyright 2015 David Walton Earle, LPC).

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Earle earned a Master's of Science in Counseling from Texas A&M and has held executive management positions in various fields including industrial construction, private investment banking, and corporate trouble shooting. He is now the president of the Earle Company, an organization dedicated to change.

As an author:

Self-published six others books: *What To Do While You Count To 10*, *Gilligan's Notes*, *Simple Communications for Complicated People*, and *Love is Not Enough*. In addition there are three workbooks entitled *The Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* a separate book for each of the first three steps. Earle also wrote a three-book self-help poetry trilogy: *Professor of Pain*, *Iron Mask*, and *Red Roses 'n Pinstripes*.

Future work: *Contents of a Small Boy's Pocket* has a target publishing of the 4th quarter of 2016.

Co-authored books on leadership: *Leadership-Helping Others Succeed* and *Extreme Leadership* and a coauthored joke book entitled, *You Might Need a Therapist if...* scheduled for publication in the 1st quarter of 2016.

Earle has been on the panel as a mediator and/or arbitrator for various organizations such as U.S. Federal Court-Middle District, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Financial Industry Regulator Authority (FINRA), and the Louisiana Supreme Court. He was on the faculty of the University of Phoenix for over 10 years.

His trademarked motto is *My Life Ill Change When I Change™*; he enjoys tennis and he lives in Baton Rouge with his wife, Penny, and their dog, Fletcher.

Using the Homepage for CEU Matrix - The Institute for Addiction and Criminal Justice Studies

The CEUMatrix – The Institute for Addiction and Criminal Justice Studies homepage (www.ceumatrix.com) contains many pieces of information and valuable links to a variety of programs, news and research findings, and information about credentialing – both local and national. We update our site on a regular basis to keep you apprised of any changes or developments in the field of addiction counseling and credentialing. Be sure to visit our site regularly, and we do recommend that you bookmark the site for fast and easy return.

WISDOM OF THE TWELVE STEPS: 4th STEP

COURSE SUMMARY

The Wisdom of the Steps is a series of generic workbooks written to assist any person with an addiction to drugs, and/or alcohol. This work-book is also for those suffering from compulsive gambling, sex addiction, love addiction, eating disorders, compulsive shopping, internet or elec-tronic obsession, plus anyone who loves someone with any of these debili-tating problems. All of these maladaptive behaviors stem from the same dysfunctional coping skills - an external solution for an internal problem. This workbook helps people heal.

The Wisdom of the Steps invites you to embark on a wonderful jour-ney, your own Odyssey into the recovery waters of change. We promise days of bright sunshine, strong winds, and periods of smooth sailing. However, be forewarned, this is a stormy and demanding ocean; you will need all hands on deck to successfully pilot these waters. Fortunately, for you, there are many who have already navigated these passages and know the way. There are also many eager sailors who will help you adjust your sails, mend your broken spars, and show you the stars for your steering.

Wisdom of the Twelve Steps

4th Step Workbook –

Thumb Work

David W. Earle, LPC

**Dedicated to all those
who suffer and
need healing.**

Do you have one or more of these?

- Alcoholism
- Drug Addiction
- Over-Eating Addiction
- Bulimia
- Anorexia
- Sexual Addiction
- Sex and Love Addiction
- Compulsive Internet Addiction
- Cyber-junkie
- Compulsive Gambling
- Codependency
- Chaos Addiction
- Shopping Addiction
- Workaholic

For clarity, this workbook calls all these afflictions, “addiction.” People growing up in dysfunctional families will find many identities and corresponding benefits from using this series.

Are all of these addictions related?

Could they all be the same thing with different faces?

These addictions are all just symptoms of a much more profound problem. The focus of all Twelve Step programs is not the actual addiction. For example, in Alcoholics Anonymous, the only requirement for membership is a *desire* to stop drinking - picking up a Desire Chip is a great start but will end in disaster if no other action follows. Understanding this concept, AA is not about alcohol but as in all Twelve Steps, the focus is on a different way of thinking, resulting in different behavior resulting in a different way of living.

Instead of focusing on the stated addiction, recovery provides space for participants to understand themselves and then begin to value themselves again. It provides structured fellowship and offers a set of coping skills far more effective than what you had before entering the program. All of these addictions share the same mechanism they ***are external solutions to internal problems.*** People often feel the need to dampen the pain and their powerful emotions, so they choose one or more addictions - an external solution to solve this internal problem.

Addicts would not have chosen their particular addiction - this external solution - if it did not work. All addictions are successful at separating the person from the pain, unsettling emotions, and deep hurts- **very effective!** If not, what would be the attraction? They work extremely well ... at least temporarily. This escape then becomes a coping skill, and then a habit that hardens over time and usage. Even when the addiction ceases to function, people continue – they are hooked. Although seldom expressed in words, deep inside the sufferer asks, “Who would I be without my coping skill - my cherished addiction? How could I survive? I cannot stand to feel all these hard emotions again; the pain would be too much. Who would I be if I faced myself in the depths of my soul? What if I went deep inside me and found nothing there?” Terrifying! This is why change is so difficult. This is why it takes a village to raise a child and a program of like sufferers to achieve recovery.

Those suffering from addiction, codependency, and compulsive behavior have found the Twelve Steps an effective guide toward serenity. The *Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* does not replace any part of a twelve-step program but rather seeks to augment the journey. Get a sponsor, read the *Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*, read the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and other approved literature. Then attend meetings, get involved with others in recovery, and develop a spiritual connection. In addition to good recovery principles, use the *Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* series of workbooks as your companion as you journey through your program – shortcutting any of these functions decreases the effectiveness of the change process.

Note: If you are working any step with a sponsor, first complete his/her suggestions – do not allow this workbook to interfere with your relationship. You may then choose to go back and work this workbook afterwards; allowing this workbook to provide additional insights to your recovery.

*After 1st Step, the word "alcohol" does not appear in the Big Book until the 12th Step.

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Books by the same author

- *What To Do While You Count To 10*
- *Professor of Pain*
- *Iron Mask*
- *Red Roses 'n Pinstripes*
- *Love is Not Enough*
- *Simple Communications for Complicated People*
- *Recovery Stories*
- *The Joy of Dysfunctional Families* – joke book
- *Contents of a Small Boy's Pocket*
- *Mr. Buster and the Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* - Children

12-Step workbooks by the same author

Wisdom of the Steps – 1st Step

Wisdom of the Steps – 4th Step

Wisdom of the Steps – 2nd Step

Wisdom of the Steps – 5th Step

Wisdom of the Steps – 3rd Step

Wisdom of the Steps – 6th Step

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Senator George Mitchell, Patricia Schroeder, et al
- *Extreme Excellence* –
Michael Higson, Arlene R. Taylor, et al
- *You Might Need a Therapist If...*
John Carfi and Cliff Carle

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About This Book

This book is divided into four main parts.

Part I – This story is an illustration of some of the principles and dynamics of this step. Learning is quicker and deeper when the principle is surrounded by a story and a *Thumb Work* provides that structure.

Part II – This section contains some basic principles, lessons, and discoveries required by all the steps and are included in all the *Wisdom of The Steps* workbook series.

Part III- This part focuses entirely on the 4th Step with discussions, challenges, and provocative self-questions.

Part IV – Appendix

*“Courage is resistance to fear, mastery
of fear - not absence of fear.”*
- Mark Twain

Preface

The *Wisdom of the Steps* is a series of generic workbooks written to assist any person with an addiction to drugs, and/or alcohol. This workbook is also for those suffering from compulsive gambling, sex addiction, love addiction, eating disorders, compulsive shopping, internet or electronic obsession, plus anyone who loves someone with any of these debilitating problems. All of these maladaptive behaviors stem from the same dysfunctional coping skills - *an external solution for an internal problem*. This workbook helps people heal.

The *Wisdom of the Steps* invites you to embark on a wonderful journey, your own Odyssey into the recovery waters of change. We promise days of bright sunshine, strong winds, and periods of smooth sailing. However, be forewarned, this is a stormy and demanding ocean; you will need all hands on deck to successfully pilot these waters. Fortunately, for you, there are many who have already navigated these passages and know the way. There are also many eager sailors who will help you adjust your sails, mend your broken spars, and show you the stars for your steering.

You are not alone.

Part I

Thumb Work

W*hy in the hell do I need to go? I thought to myself and almost said it aloud. How is going to some damn addiction meeting going to help me? It is my son who is addicted, not me. Why am I here?*

I walked into the room, and although I was about ten minutes early, there were a good number of people already seated, most already talking to each other. Obviously, many knew each other, for there was a good deal of interaction. I did not want to talk to anyone and prayed I would not see someone who knew me, that would be too embarrassing. I felt mortified – just the thought of meeting someone I knew was humiliating. *What would they think?*

I was determined to attend as instructed, and then, I'd make a beeline back home. For the life of me, I could not see how this could help me. My mind chatter focused on one thought, *Who needs to be here is my drug-addicted son and my crazy wife; they are the ones who are sick. They are the ones who desperately need to change.* I closed my eyes, praying for my God to change them.

I remembered what my counselor told me. “The meeting I want you to attend is a speaker’s meeting, and if you pay attention, you will get something out of it.” I doubted it, but I did not want to look like I was not cooperative. What was so discouraging - I was continuing counseling, but my wife never went back. My son relapsed, and she quit counseling; I was the only one left. If I was honest with myself, I only wanted to look good to the counselor, then I wouldn’t feel bad, if I too never went back ... bunch of shit anyway.

I found my way to a large cafeteria of a local substance abuse hospital for the Sunday night speaker’s meeting. More people came in and filled the chairs, some with smiles, but many I could see were clearly hurting. *Maybe they have a wife like mine,* I chuckled to myself. Then there was a hush over the room, and the chairperson began to speak, “We welcome you to this Al-Anon Family Group Meeting, and hope you will find in this fellowship the help, support, and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy. We who live, or have lived, with the problem of alcoholism understand as perhaps few others can.”

I smiled to myself, *how can anyone know what it is like to live with an addictive kid who lies, steals, and is totally disrespectful. And he calls me an asshole!* Suddenly, I felt a sharp pain piercing my heart and brain; I bowed my head with grief. *She's gone, my son's out on the streets doing who knows what, and my daughter is on the far side of the moon. I'm wasting time at this stupid meeting! Why am I here,* this recurring thought played like a broken record in my head, ... *that stupid counselor doesn't know what he's talking about. If there was an easy way of leaving without everyone seeing me, I'd be out of here, but now with everyone's eyes on me, I'd be too embarrassed* was the unanimous decision of the committee residing in my head.

The chairperson continued reading, “We, too, were lonely and frustrated, but in Al-Anon, we discovered that no situation is really hopeless and that it is possible for us to find contentment and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not. We urge you to try our program. It has helped many of us find solutions that led to serenity. So much depends on our own attitudes, and as we learn to place our problem in its true perspective, we find it loses its power to dominate our thoughts and our lives.”

My attitude, I thought, ...*my attitude, what about hers?* I felt the pain I had so far successfully kept at bay, *she left me, why ... why ... why.* My thoughts then turned to my son, *The last time I saw him, he was pissed off, walking down the drive away from me.* I remembered my focus was on his cowboy boots ... watching his cowboy boots, walking away from me. My son who I love, but damn it, he had turned into someone I did not want to be around. Evidently, he felt the same about me because since those cowboy boots walked away, I had not seen him again.

The chairperson continued: “The family situation is bound to improve as we apply the Al-Anon ideas. Without such spiritual help, living with an alcoholic is too much for most of us. Our thinking becomes distorted by trying to force solutions, and we become irritable and unreasonable without knowing it.”

After various readings, none of which made sense to me, a woman introduced the speaker for the evening who would “tell her story.” The moderator said some nice things about how much she improved and what a nice person she was. *Okay*, I thought, *so she*

changed and is a nice person, not once has anyone told me anything I could use to get him to change ... this is a waste of time. Then the speaker began to tell her story:

Speaker:

I met him on a hayride in the 8th grade when he kissed me on the cheek. I guess from that moment on, I was hooked. We married two years after graduating high school. We had a lot in common; both our daddies were alcoholics, and both deserted their families. Both our mothers were stressed out - sole supporters of their families, trying to hold everyone together. Of course, they would never let anyone know what was really going on behind closed doors. I now have others in Al-Anon to talk to, a place where I can be honest, but my mother suffered in her family-imposed rule of silence. I know the release I get from honestly sharing in the accepting atmosphere of a 12-step program. She did not have that luxury; no wonder the stress got to her, and she died young.

Both of our families were dirt poor, and neither of us had a role model for how to have a successful marriage. Soon after we were married, he started drinking. Since we both grew up around alcohol, this was not unexpected; in fact, it was what we knew best; what was expected - adults drink. I quickly began my role of caretaker; a role I successfully practiced for the next 25 years.

The word “caretaker” struck a chord with me. Well, isn’t being a father really - just a caretaker. Doesn’t a woman want a strong man to fix her problems? I considered myself a good caretaker and tried to express my love through being a good provider and fixing others’ problems. Now, this woman was telling me that I was doing something wrong? I was already discouraged, but now also confused.

Speaker:

The marriage lasted eleven years before we divorced. It was after the divorce, I discovered Al Anon. I was single for two years, but we always kept

in touch. I still loved him and thought the world of him, but could not live with his drinking.

So about two years after the divorce with the ink on our decree still fresh, we decided to give it another shot; we married again. It wasn't long before all his promises fell into the trashcan along with his empties. He started drinking again. The problem was his drinking, compounded by my reaction, killed any chance of a normal, loving relationship; so like the up and down motion of a yo-yo, we separated again. See, I knew it was his drinking that was the source of all my problems, and if he would only quit, I could be happy. However, he wouldn't stop, and since I was not happy, I concluded ... it was all his fault.

Man, I'm not an alcoholic, my brain went into high gear, I have heard stories about how difficult they are. She left me for far less than being an alcoholic. If this speaker went back to her husband, why can't my wife return? I felt the crushing weight of her rejection and hot tears just below the surface.

Speaker:

When we separated this time, we did not divorce. By this time, I had made my mind up, I did not want to leave him; however, I was not strong enough to live with his disease. I decided to see if it was possible for me to be tough enough to be in a relationship with an active alcoholic, but not allow his disease to suck me under, too. I was unsure I could do this, but I was determined to do my part to see if it were possible.

Staying in a relationship with an active alcoholic may not work in marriages where there is physical abuse, infidelity, DUIs, and/or where the disease has progressed to the point the love and positive regard are gone. In our case, several things were working in our favor. The first was we still loved each other. Love can mitigate many problems. It allows for forgiveness and understanding so necessary in difficult relationships. Once love is gone, everything else becomes much harder. He was not a barroom

drunk, so he never had a brush with the law or lost his job. He would do his drinking at home, so we did not face many of the problems others faced. All through our lives, we had a strong connection with the same Higher Power. Our God was the cornerstone of our relationship, and as dysfunctional as it was, we could always connect through our mutual Higher Power. Sometimes I laughed to myself, our relationship seemed to be at times, “Say a prayer, and crack another.”

The audience chuckled at the oxymoron.

Speaker:

The turning point for me was the tragic death of a very dear friend who was murdered. This event shook me to the core and made me examine everything I held dear. Her death brought home how limited our time is here on earth and how tenuous life is; Mother Nature guarantees no one’s lifetime. I had to examine a hard question ... just what do I want out of life? I knew I did not want to live alone. I knew I loved him, so whatever was left of my time became precious, and I wanted to share it with him. One night, I turned it over to my Higher Power. How can I live with his addiction and still be with the man I love? A man who gives no sign he is ever going to quit. How can I do this was my silent and fervor prayer. I then received a simple message ... trust.

My emotionally wrought brain began to hear her words – or maybe, it was the pain I felt – but something made me focus instead of reacting. I wanted to believe, but dared not. I thought, *Trust? What? Trust some god-in-the-sky hocus-pocus? I tried that and even He deserted me. Trust - I can’t even begin to understand that word. And what did she say about a turning point?* Here again, my mind slowed down and began to think instead of reacting. *Maybe this can be a turning point for me. What I have been doing so far sure as hell has not worked ... hmm ... turning point?*

Speaker:

With this assurance from my creator and strong Al-Anon support, I thought perhaps I could be okay. By the time I moved back in, his health had turned for the worse. All the drinking, all the smoking had placed a severe toll on his physical condition. Now it was more than just his addiction, it was also his ever-declining health I had to deal with.

In the Big Book, Chapter 5 – How It Works, says, “Rarely, have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path...” Well, he was in and out of AA for many years, attended many meetings, worked a program, got a sponsor, and had some sobriety. I know he asked for sobriety in the morning, and I heard him be thankful at night, but he was unsuccessful at putting together many months of continuous sobriety. Sadly, the Big Book explains about those who fail, “...will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves.” Before every meeting, when someone reads the section, “How it Works,” I glossed over this part, thinking it was about someone else. People who could not “get honest” they must be psychopaths, serial killers, or despicable people. I thought this could not be true for us, for my husband was none of those. Gradually, I came out of denial to believe he was constitutionally incapable of the honesty needed for sobriety; he lived in denial about what his drinking was doing to his health, happiness, and to me. Tragically, he was one “...of those such unfortunates.”

Now do not get me wrong, I had my own issues. This only occurred to my codependent-trained brain when I worked the 4th Step, make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. It was only after I started looking at myself, did I come out of my denial. When I started listing my character defects ... it took several Big Chief notebooks and several boxes of crayons to list them all.

There were nervous chuckles from the audience at the picture of this woman writing her character defects in her Big Chief notebook with crayons.

Speaker:

Doing this exercise, I woke up to my need to work on me. I could continue being part of the problem or as my sponsor told me “...or you can be part of the solution.” Since my way of living was not working, I followed her advice and pointed my two thumbs at me. I started doing Thumb Work. “Finger Work” as my sponsor explained was pointing my fingers at another expecting them to change so I could be okay. The 4th step made me change the focus of my recovery and do Thumb Work looking at me.

She had my attention now; here was something I could latch on to. *Thumb work ... now that is a novel concept. My son needs to do Thumb Work and so does my wife. They sure have been pointing their fingers at me, demanding that I change. Maybe, this speaker can help me get them to do Thumb Work.*

Speaker:

When I started looking at me, I discovered I was not a healthy person. My first clue ... look who I married ... an alcoholic. Why would a sane person want to be with an alcoholic?

The answer hurt, but woke me up. I was also sick. This was the conclusion I did not want to look at. Although when he first gave me that hayride kiss, I did not consciously know he was addicted; his behavior was normal to me so I was comfortable with what I would now label unacceptable behavior. Back then, I did not know what I know now. Since he did have nice buns and gave me a kiss on the cheek, it must have been ordained in the stars. Alcoholics are attracted to co-alcoholics, and co-alcoholics love the responsibility of taking care of their own personal alcoholic; he became mine, and we lived happily ever after. Both of our behaviors, our coping skills were what we knew best and were highly dysfunctional. I did not understand this until well into my recovery program. In our insanity, we

thought by combining our lives together, we would make two incomplete people whole – a receipt for continued failure.

The way I escaped from my own pain was not through alcohol but through work; I was a work-a-holic. I had my own shame going for me, bringing me down into the swamp of despair. My job was to fix him, and I was failing at the one responsibility that I needed to do perfectly. Try as I might, I could not change him, so I needed my own escape – work became mine.

My mind screamed, “She had to change to live with an alcoholic? She is not getting him to do any Thumb Work; instead, she had to change in order to live with his addiction. Now, that is crazy; her husband has the problem, and she lets him get away with being an asshole and focuses on herself instead. These people are crazy!

Speaker:

The only way I was able to live with an active addict was because of my program; I owe a lot to Al Anon; actually, I owe this program my life. Here I learned acceptance, that beautiful, powerful word. Remember the Big Book quote, “And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today” and “...my serenity is inversely proportional to my expectations.” I struggled with this concept for years. How could I accept his drinking? How could I accept his mistress ... Ethyl ... his ethyl alcohol was more important to him than me? How could I accept he would not do what I wanted him to do ... demanded him to do ... begged him to do? How could I accept my love was not strong enough to change him?

My original thinking was, if I accepted him, then I condoned his drinking. Yes, to me, acceptance meant condoning, and I was raised by a feisty, controlling, and demanding mother who knew right from wrong. Drinking was wrong; I knew that. I knew how to get my way, and by God, all I needed to do was be strong enough, to yell loudly, demand, weep, and threaten him into submission. If I worked hard enough, he would change, and I was certain eventually, he would quit drinking. His quitting was the

answer to all my problems; then, I could be happy. Alcohol was the problem, and if only he would change, we would have such a fine life - happily ever after.

Happily, ever after, I concluded, that was a big myth! Here again, I quickly shifted my thinking and started to reflect, and to think one word ... acceptance could be the answer to all my problems ... hmm ... naw ... bullshit! That is too simple, too naive, too stupid! That was my first reaction, but then I deepened my reflection, The speaker seemed to be a happy, calm woman living with an addicted man, yet she seemed sane. Maybe, just maybe, she might have something I do not.

Speaker:

Al-Anon helped me see how fruitless my thinking was. Control, I had to give that up, and as much as I did not want to ... I learned how to accept it. Once I learned that acceptance was not condoning, rather it was accepting life as it is - not as I wished it to be, thought I deserved it to be, or as in my storybook mind told me ... happily ever after ... how it should be. I began to love that wonderful line, and I think worth repeating now, “And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today.” Do you know how many times I had to read that selection, how many days when I tried to control and failed? Without this wonderful quote, I would have shriveled up in a corner in defeat. Eventually, its wisdom began to sink in; I could not change him, but I could learn to accept him and his disease. I, too, could live life on life’s terms in acceptance.

*And I could not live with him, and his disease, without good strong boundaries ... my boundaries. I once heard during one meeting, “Alcoholics do not have relationships, **they take hostages!**”*

Everyone chuckled with the truth of this statement, and although I also laughed, it was a painful realization. I thought, *my son and his addiction has controlled my family. He was out of control, and so was the rest of my family. He was on drugs, my wife left me, my daughter doesn’t want to have anything to do with me, and my business is*

spiralng out of control towards failure. If there were just one area of my life that was stable then maybe I could function, but there wasn't, and now, this speaker tells me to focus on myself? She wants me to make a list of my shortcomings. I'd like to believe this could work, but what a stretch!

Speaker:

"Where does he stop, and I begin? How do I say no? Just where are my boundaries? I've never had identifiable boundaries, and if I knew where they were, how could I effectively defend them without turning me into a serial killer?" I learned if it got too bad, I would just leave home for a while: sometimes it was a matter of hours, sometimes days. I did not leave as a method of punishing him or trying to control him, but to protect myself. I had many program friends who knew that I was struggling and offered refuge on their couch or spare bedroom. After the storm, I'd always return to him, not because I was needy or had battered wife syndrome. No, I returned, because this is where I wanted to be ... with the man I love."

Oh, that's good news, my heart leapt. Maybe after this storm, my wife will come back to me. A warm glow came over me, thinking what it would be like if she returned. That warm glow faded into the reality of what the speaker was saying, and I reflected, Boundaries ... I had never thought about boundaries. I guess it's like when my son uses my tools and doesn't put them back, and I yell at him or when my daughter steals out of her mother's purse. I was confused.

Speaker:

You see, despite his behavior, I loved him. With the help of the program, I learned to separate the person from the behavior. His behavior was often deplorable and unacceptable, but as a person, he is a child of God, precious and free the same as me. With this simple realization, I could now separate him as a person from his behavior. When his behavior was deplorable, and if I needed to confront that, I could now do that without attacking the problem through him as a person. When I used this method, I could defend my boundaries with respect instead of using the painful things I used to say

and do. Once I understood my reactions and started reacting differently, I began to mellow, and as strange as this may seem, when I calmed down and did not attack him, I grew stronger. The stronger I became, the less I would put up with. When he crossed a boundary, I was then able to rattle his cage and say, "Thou shalt not cross this line." I tried very hard not to attack any bad behavior through him, the person, but confronted the behavior directly.

Detachment was another closely aligned tool I found so necessary. I learned that detachment was "...not detaching from the person but from the agony of involvement." I did not want to detach from my husband but had to detach from his disease-driven chaos. Even with the wonderful tools of Al-Anon, my many sober friends, and my sponsor, there were times I needed to escape his chaos and work on my own deep dark issues. Several times, I left home and travelled to the frozen north for a professional renewal center to get me back.

*I felt the bitter vile taste of disgust in my throat when I thought about my son's lying, yelling, and disrespect. I wanted to hit him ... hard. Suddenly, my heart leaped as I thought, *what she was saying is giving me hope, that maybe I could separate him from his behavior. Maybe I could love him as a person and deplore his behavior. I wanted to beat him so badly but deep down what I really wanted - was to hold him and forgive him - maybe here is a solution, detachment to separate me from the agony of involvement, the chaos. I welcomed the day I could do that.**

Speaker:

I was able to survive, but I don't want to leave you with a misconception, I not only survived in that relationship, but I think I ... thrived. I was living with the man I loved, I was happy, I had many friends, and I felt good about myself. I felt the presence of my Higher Power when I needed His strength. I could rely on that stabilizing calmness when I desperately needed it. I always felt, with my high power, I would be all right. My first job was to take care of myself, and once I realized I could not control him,

we seldom fought or even argued. The disease was really the only problem that existed between us, and once I figured out my part and found the necessary tools, the tension substantially decreased.

That's it ... that's it. I suddenly knew what she was talking about, *Take care of me.* I had never considered this before. I remembered writing an essay several years ago entitled, "Confessions of a 37 ½ Year Old." In part of this essay, I made a list of what was the most important thing in my life, then the next, and on down. I put God first, then my family, then my country, and on down. I think my place on the list was probably number seven or eight. Back then, I knew something was very wrong with this list but had not a clue what the problem was. *I know now, I exclaimed to myself, I was not on the list in the proper place; I need to take care of myself in order to take care of others, because I am so low on the list, and my life is in shambles. She's telling me I need to take care of me, how novel.*

Speaker:

I told my story many times, and several times, others would record it. He would not attend the speaker's meeting, but he always wanted to hear the tape of what I had to say ... maybe he wanted to know what I really thought about him. He told me several times he was proud of my Al-Anon Black Belt. Even with many things going for me, it was hard to see him slowly killing himself with alcohol and nicotine. I watched his health slowly fail; I knew I would not have him long. Sometimes, we would go for a walk, and we found a beautiful spot where we could watch the owls getting ready for their nightly prowls. It was these memories that allowed me to be happy living with active addiction. When I think about him now, I miss that big hunk. Even with his disease, we had a good relationship; I would not change any of it. I've lived with this man for almost fifty years on and off, and I would not have traded my life for anyone else's. Despite what we were dealing with, I was determined not to allow my fear to chase my dreams away.

There was a pause, while her words sank into each person in the audience, then a profound silence as all contemplated her story. As I looked around the room, it was obvious her story inspired many that evening, and I knew her words were going to help me improve. I needed to start my list of character defects. The first one on my inventory was to take care of myself. I did not know how to do this, but I knew for sure ... I needed to be on the list. The next thing I needed was to change my focus from Finger Work to Thumb Work. It was later on after I was in Al-Anon for a while, my sponsor told me to slow down and work the first three steps, before I worked on my inventory for the fourth step.

As I drove home that evening, my heart was lighter, there was hope in my soul, and my tears were of joy for having found a solution. I found Al-Anon and a new family. I would now work an Al-Anon program; maybe someday, I will have enough wisdom to share with others. I was determined I was not going to ever allow my fears to again chase my dreams away.

Part II

Before Beginning

The steps if followed will create change. With each step, you are a somewhat different person than before. You will see things in a little different way - some parts of your life, your thoughts, and levels of awareness have changed. Working the steps helps change thinking, providing recovery principals to work with. People do not get to this step without a change – profound change. Since you have finished the first three steps of your recovery, you already have the proof in your own life.

Part II of the *Wisdom of the Twelve Step* series is similar for the 4th, 5th, and 6th Step workbooks. This is general information and vital to understanding this process. If you have already used another step workbook of this series, you are familiar with some of the contents. Since each person may have accessed different workbooks, at the risk of repetition, this information is included and will prove useful to you.

As you complete each step, give yourself permission to answer the same questions again – you will experience growth between answers. This comparison allows for new insights and often provides additional understanding. Read your old answers from previous steps, and then, answer the same questions again. This way you can measure your growth and maturity as you journey through the 12 Steps using the *Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* as your guide.

Note: In this workbook, the words “God” and “Higher Power” both appear capitalized. This is comfortable to many people, but some find this practice restrictive as it brings to mind certain definitions found in religion. This workbook series does not seek to take away any definition you may have, or inflict one upon you. To allow for those who may rebel against being included in some religious box, in *Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* when you see the word “God” or “Higher Power” in capital letters, you can leave it as it is or substitute “god” or “higher power” in your mind without the traditional capitalization. Some people find this more comfortable.

Understanding the Wisdom of the Twelve Steps

*“Scared is what you're feeling.
Brave is what you're doing.”*
- Emma Donoghue

The Twelve Steps have four rather distinct sections:

- Steps 1, 2, and 3 – Encourages developing your personal relationship with a power greater than yourself that is much stronger than your addiction.
- Steps 4, 5, and 6 – Discovering yourself to bring you back from the edge of extinction into the joy of life.
- Steps 7, 8, and 9 – Improving relationships with other people.
- Steps 10, 11, and 12 – Connecting with the collective wisdom of the universe.

Wisdom of the Twelve Steps is a series of individual workbooks to assist recovering people in working the steps, one step at a time. The steps are a journey of change; they seem simple and straightforward - and they are - but at the same time, translating this simple wisdom in our complicated brains takes time, understanding, and the guidance of others.

You are the sum product of the decisions you have already made. Some choices have been wonderful, and some have put you in here beginning the arduous task of learning how to live free through the 12 Steps. The *Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* is a series of workbooks designed to help you gain the power from the simple wisdom of the 12 Steps.

Some may groan –*Oh no, not a workbook*, remembering the unhappy hours in grade school toiling over lessons you saw no value in learning, instead of playing the schoolyard. You are different now, and the reason you are reading this now is because it represents something you want, and desperately need. The various questions require you to think, and when sharing your revelations with others, you learn new insights into the magic of recovery. Many have difficulty looking at the guilt-inducing spaces after each question knowing what it suggests of you. Remember this is your journey – your personal journey – and how you respond is your choice. Whatever you choose to write is your decision alone. Nobody is going to grade your answers, check your spelling, or criticize your

cursive writing. Some may skip writing in this workbook and use a separate tablet, and that is okay. The results are what you are after, and how you paint your picture is personal.

Wisdom of the Twelve Steps includes a recovery story related to each step. Following the story is information about how to work the step, and each workbook concludes with a series of specific thought - provoking questions. These questions, when answered, provide understanding often overlooked without this process. If your goal is to have a happier and more productive life, then challenge yourself to join the fellowship of others struggling with finding the answers to these difficult questions.

To gain the maximum benefit from your recovery process, attend 12-Steps meetings, find/talk to your sponsor, and share in the recovering fellowship. Allow these wonderful parts of the program to be the catalyst for your change process. Without the energy and motivation offered by the recovering community, this workbook will sit on your shelf collecting dust ... a sad reminder of the happiness you chose ***to give away to your addiction.***

Think of your family on Christmas morning, when everyone gathers in their pajamas, drinking coffee or hot chocolate and eating sticky buns. There is happiness all around, lessening of past tensions, and many smiles of anticipation. We look at the Christmas tree and all the gifts arranged beneath its decorated branches. We are excited about seeing the people we care about opening their gifts as we anticipate tearing off the brightly colored wrapping paper from ours. What would Christmas morning be if we did not open the presents? Is there anyone who does not want to open his or her gifts? Excellent question. However, this is what happens with people who attempt the 12-Steps but do not actively work the steps; they have the joy of Christmas but without the gifts available.

Christmas morning is similar to attending a 12-Step meeting. As wonderful and beneficial as these meetings are, we miss the presents under the recovery tree if we do not work the steps, if we choose not to open the presents awaiting our joy. Are you ready to open your presents?

There will be areas in this workbook you agree with, some you may not, but hopefully, much will challenge you. Remember changing yourself is challenging how you think.

Not all your thoughts are wrong, misguided, or incorrect, but many are. Allow yourself permission to examine *all* your thoughts ... what is working for you and what is not. The program and this workbook help you start the process of ***thinking about your thinking***. The more you are aware of your thinking, the more successful your decisions. ***Right now, you are the sum total of the decisions you have already made.*** Get input from those who you respect, ask questions, share in the meetings ... be open-minded ... *challenge yourself*. Thinking about your thinking makes for much better decision - making ability.

After this section, there is a specific series of questions for each individual step with space to answer each. Spend the necessary time digging deep for understanding. It may help to read your answers to your sponsor, providing a wonderful place for additional learning. These questions and your answers will inspire you and your share partner.

Some work the steps quicker than others - if it takes you longer, do not worry; work at your pace and in your own time. Congratulations, you are now ready to begin working another step. Join the many people over the years that have used the 12-Steps for positive change.

*“... courage was not the absence of fear,
but the triumph over it. The brave man
is not he who does not feel afraid,
but he who conquers that fear.”*
- Nelson Mandela

Promise

Congratulations! You have completed the first three steps. Looking back, most people agree that it was desperation that drove them to begin, and it was a connection with a Higher Power that inspired them to complete this difficult task. Desperation to escape the horrible life they were living. Desperation to find something better, something that works. You entered recovery with hope.; the first three steps changed that hope into belief. In the meetings – even in the midst of horrific stories – you saw smiles, laughter, and your hope began to blossom into belief. Again, congratulations, many start this process - sadly, many do not finish. The failures of others leave you with a powerful question – ***just how free do you want to be?***

Your journey now asks for something many think insurmountable – ***change***. Anticipating what lies before you, it is easy to think you cannot complete this part of your journey. However, you have already made giant strides toward your goal of serenity. You entered recovery and now worked the first three steps. You did it. Even despite the many obstacles placed in your way, you’ve completed what you intended. And just what was the greatest obstacle you overcame? Most agree, it was themselves – ***we are our own worst enemy***. The goal of the next part of your journey is to turn this one-time enemy into a friend - by the end of step twelve - best friend. Sound good? Many people confess at this stage in their recovery they have just begun to tolerate themselves - barely. It gets better, for self-love is now available for those who choose it. Love is a decision, and you are now hereby challenged to decide to love yourself. These next three steps will become increasingly challenging, but you will be heartened by your continuing success.

In the winter, the trees lose their leaves, and although you know spring will bring forth new growth, the tree looks dead. What many do not realize, it is in the winter when the leaves are gone and the trees look dormant that the roots grow stronger for the coming spring. Because of your addiction, co-dependency, and/or compulsive behavior, you have experienced a devastating and long winter. Struggling with your decision to enter recovery, your roots began to grow, and the first three steps were the fertilizer you needed.

Quoting from the *Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* - 1st – 3rd Step:

Here is the promise: start your study of the magic of the Twelve Steps, use this book or another like it as your guide, work with your sponsor, be honest, and share what you learn with others. *This is all you have to do to chase away the darkness, stay sober, and find serenity.* This is not only the promise of this book, but also an echo of many thousands of men and women who would wish you well and attest to the success of the Twelve Steps. Many of these people could not see out of their black hole. By working the program, they became successful, despite the blackness of their past. They now are rewarded for their hard work, live in the light, and are happy they chose to continue. Follow their lead, and you *will* be successful.

Remember: **you** are the tip of the change arrow, poised on the edge of discovery. You stand at a crossroads. What you do will substantially affect the rest of your life and the lives of many others. Once begun, your recovery sends ripples of change through the universe, affecting not only your life but the lives of those you love, now and for generations to come.

“Being resentful ... is like taking poison and waiting for the other person to die.”
- Alan Brandt

Beginning Survey

Since some tend to have better days than others, give yourself a range - say from 4 to 6. For this exercise, think about most of your days – what range would be normal for you? How would you rate yourself?

Restless, Irritated, and Discontented							Happy, Joyous, and Free		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Where are you on this continuum?

Where would you like to be?

Beginning Survey - continued

Would you go to almost any lengths to achieve your goals?

What is the cost to you to achieve your goal?

What well-used coping skills would you need to change?

What security would you have to give up in order to break your current status quo?

Who would you be if you went from Restless, Irritated, and Discontented to Happy, Joyous, and Free?

Habits

One habit from Steven Covey's book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* is:

“Begin with the end in mind.”

Exercise 1

4th Step - Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Write what you want to happen, as the result of working this step. Begin with the ***end in mind*** (With any question in this book, give yourself permission to be creative - sometimes just one word works best, sometimes it takes a picture, and often, several paragraphs are necessary. Note: we do not take off points for spelling).

Big Book – Promises

*“...codependency ... is about the loss of selfhood...
a condition wherein one has no inner life.”*
- John Bradshaw

“If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity, and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellow man. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.”

This excerpt from the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, pages 83-84, is reprinted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (“AAWS”) Permission to use this excerpt does not mean that AAWS is in any way affiliated with this program. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism only – use of this material in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after A.A., but which address other problems or concerns, or in any other non-A.A. context, does not imply otherwise.

One of the simplest, yet profound, Twelve Step promises is also the name of Chapter Two of *Alcoholics Anonymous* ... **There is a solution.** People coming out of the cold of addiction find comfort knowing there is a solution, AND it is available. Many, before you pioneered it into a simple yet powerful method of recovery, called the Twelve Steps. It is yours if you wish to use it. “***There is a solution.***”

The more work you do on the steps, the closer the promises become true for you. If a “...new freedom and a new happiness...” is what you want, then the path has already been blazed.

4th Step Doubts

When using this workbook, separate your religion, or lack thereof, from this discussion. People who confuse the two cost themselves dearly. ***Looking inward to find and claim the prize of self, this book calls spirituality.***

Try to temporarily mentally divorce yourself from your faith or non-faith. You may return to your previous beliefs at any time, as nothing in this series wants you to discard cherished beliefs or non-beliefs. These are *yours* and represent your best thinking to date. This exercise only seeks to provide a broadening sense of awareness allowing for exploration into previous hidden parts of your being. Join this Explorers Club, and in this search, you can add to what you already believe.

Which of these doubts are yours?

- You doubt that if making this inventory will do any good.
- You doubt if you really want to do this exercise.
- You doubt you can be honest enough.
- You doubt you want to remember all that needs to be on this list.
- You doubt you are strong enough to finish.
- You doubt you could stand yourself once you have this list.
- You doubt if you could ever share it with others.

- You doubt that if people ever knew the real you they would ever accept you.
- You doubt if you have enough redeeming qualities to offset your defects.

The unhealthy side of doubts is allowing them to control you. If some or all of the doubts are true, can you continue with this step? Are you going to allow your doubts, your fears to keep you from achieving your goal?

The healthy side of doubt is realizing the chasm is ten-feet wide, and your best leap is only eight feet. Your doubts kept you from testing a physical certainty with stupidity. In this case, your doubt worked for you. Your fear kept you from jumping – your doubt turned out to be true and keep you from a tragic mistake.

Acknowledge and manage your emotions – at birth, they are given to you as a guide (Mood Chart, page 63). As an addictive/codependent person, you know how to hide, medicate, and run from emotions. Instead, work on managing them - not allowing your feelings to control your life.

What were your doubts for the first three steps? How many of these fears turned out to be true? How many were just FEAR?

F.E.A.R. ***False Evidences Appearing Real***

Specifically what are your doubts about the 4th Step? List them here.

Note: Recovery allows the full expression of all emotions, especially joy. To celebrate the freeing effect of happiness, several *smile* statements are included to lighten your burden. Although not designed to split your sides with uproarious laughter, in these jokes, we see ourselves from a different point of view. When we can laugh, we spit in the eye of addiction with comic relief.

You might need recovery when...
attending your family reunion, is like
returning to the scene of the crime.

Necessary Components:

To make any change, a person must have three components:

- **Desire to change**
- **Willingness**
- **Ability**

Exercise 2

- Do you have the ***desire*** to change? What does your desire look like? What are your motivators?

Exercise 3

- Do you have the ***willingness*** to change? How do you describe your willingness? What problems interfere with your willingness? What is your motivation to change?

The Twelve Steps create a pathway that allows natural wisdom to appear. Hear the words, experience the wisdom of others, accept what you intuitively know to be true, and this change can be yours. You already have the ability, once you realize the power is within you...trust the process.

Exercise 4

Do you have the ***ability*** to change? Change is hard. Do you already have the necessary tools for change such as a sponsor, 12-Step meetings, safe friends, self-help literature, AA literature, etc.? Do you have others willing, and are you able to be honest when you stray into stinking thinking? Do you have the encouragement of supportive friends who will listen and be your cheerleader with an occasional pat on the back? What do you need but are currently missing in order to be successful? How can you develop what you need?

Change

*“Worrying, obsessing, and controlling are illusions.
They are tricks we play on ourselves.”*
- Melody Beattie

The desire to change has a wonderful ally, motivating humans toward change – *pain*. Many 12-Step meetings have the newcomer tradition. With this tradition, a different format automatically happens where participants change the structure of their sharing into *what it was like, what happened, and where they are now*. Many say the newcomer is the most important person in the room. As welcoming as that statement is, this different format allows the participants to review their own history, reminding them how miserable their lives once were, compared to where they are today. They get to recall the suffering, the misery, the pain. This memory - as unpleasant as it often is – becomes the touchstone for progress. Pain often fuels the desire necessary to succeed. Think about allowing pain ... your pain ... to become your ally. Strange concept, accepting something that before you thought had to be medicated. This is the same pain you previously let control you. Can you embrace your pain and make it work for you? With this change in perspective, pain then becomes your ally.

Sadly, some taste recovery and marvel at the flavor, but then, do not choose to enjoy the entire 12-Step meal. When the pain’s motivation is gone and they have found some relief, they think this is all they need and miss the rest of the beautiful journey.

You might need recovery when...
you talk to yourself when
you want expert advice.

Are you going to be one of those who wants the many benefits of a Twelve-Step program but looks for an “easier, softer way?” This happens when your ***addict voice*** speaks, and you listen. The addictive part of you is so cunning, powerful, and baffling, it will talk you into anything.

There are two common thoughts that occur to most everyone attending Twelve-Step meetings. “I can do this my way” is the first thought on this stinking thinking list,

and the second is, “I don’t belong here - I’m not as bad as **them**.” Both are powerful concepts that keep people away or gives them permission to leave. When these types of thoughts are threatening your recovery, look for identification in the fellowship not differences, and you will find what you are looking for.

Give yourself permission to complete this step by declaring to yourself, your sponsor, and to trusted friends your determination to complete this step. It is harder to quit after this declaration. After saying your goals aloud, your **addict voice** ceases to have the power it once had over you. **Correction** - the power you **gave** it to control you.

*“... until you get your own act together,
you’re not ready for Big Love.
What you’re ready for is one of
those codependent relationships where
you desperately need a partner.”
- Bruce H. Lipton*

Overview of the 4th, 5th, and 6th Steps

Discovering yourself – brings you back from the edge of extinction into ***the joy of life.***

4th Step – Honesty

Being willing to do the 4th Step requires all of your strength and desire, together with a very supportive environment. It demands embracing your hidden self, the shame you so long dreaded and often acted out in an attempt to escape its powerful grip. You hid your shame in the dark recesses of your shame closet where it metastasized, grew larger, and more powerful. So powerful, you allowed it to control your life. You let it dictate your degree of misery. You gave your power away to this dark energy. Your 12-Step journey has been, and will continue to be, revealing, unsettling, fearful, and often painful, but necessary for healing. One 12-Step slogan is, “*We are as sick as our secrets.*” This is so very true, and with this step, we begin to become real. ***We begin to heal.***

5th Step - Willingness

With the 4th Step, you start a process of dealing with the dark and hidden recesses of your psyche stored in your personal Shame Closet. With the 5th Step, you open the door of the dreaded closet, reach in take a handful of slimy shame, close the closet door, and then, expose this shame to the light of day. As fearful as this process is, you are in control of the door. You can close it anytime you feel overwhelmed. This shame – your long-dreaded humiliations – you hold in your trembling hands. Then with a great deal of courage – courage you may not think you have – you allow the pain of the past to be your ally. Open your hand and expose your shame to the light. You may fear this step, and with good reason. The exercise unmask your denials, your false masks of protection you so long hid behind. You now stand naked – black ink on white paper trembling with the magnitude of your wrongs. Opening your hands reveals the truth. You allow the sunlight to radiant upon what was once darkness, and you see the sun healing effects on what you once thought so dominant.

Using the shame-closet as an analogy, ***you are in control.*** You have the power. You have the strength. You will be successful.

In the 5th Step, sharing your list with another caring person and your Higher Power does not change what happened, your part in it, or how you affected others. It does not excuse you nor forgive you. It does not change wrongs into rights. However, it does begin the process of putting shame into its proper place. It opens the door on your willingness to face up to your wrongs - self-forgiveness will not enter until this difficult task is completed. In this step, you begin to understand yourself and to look forward to the real possibility of forgiveness. You begin to feel lighter as you share the darkest unfathomable depths of your soul. From your shoulders, many years of encrusted self-loathing, blame, and shame begins to withdraw. You may be shocked, then relieved, when you finish your inventory. Your sponsor asks this simple, yet profound question, “Is that all you did?” This simple question puts many fears to rest. You smile with relief and answer, “Yes, that is all I did.”

You might need recovery when...
you asked her to be your wife but what
you really wanted was a mommy!

She might need recovery when...
she said, “Yes.”

6th Step - Change

The 6th Step begins your letting go. By putting all of your character defects into their proper perspective and then turning them over to a power greater than yourself, you achieve freedom! Just letting them go is ***freedom***. In this step, you realize the forgiveness you so desperately sought, earnestly desired, but so doubted its existence awaits you. As strange as this may seem, the gift of forgiveness is waiting on your admitting your transgressions and becoming agreeable - willing to turn them over.

The 4th, 5th, and 6th Steps are simple ... ***simple ... but not easy***.

Exercise 5

Describe the pressures on you to return to your old lifestyle. What forces are pulling you toward relapse?

You might need recovery when...

drunk you look for warehouses.

When sober you realize just
what a poor speller you are.

Exercise 6

You defined your desire to change, your willingness, and what abilities you have to accomplish your goals. Now put it in a large context. What meaning can you obtain from the suffering you experienced from your addiction? Many people have trouble with this question; so if you find yourself so stuck, do not ignore this question but rather put down any answer while allowing the concept to filter through your consciousness. This question seems very strange, but its answer is an important part of your recovery journey. Give yourself permission to explore this question. What is the purpose, or the significance of your efforts – why subject yourself to the scrutiny of the steps? Until you can answer this question, progress will be slow and relapse likely.

*“Toxic shame is true agony.
It is a pain felt from the inside,
in the core of our being.
It is excruciatingly painful.”
— John Bradshaw*

Exercise 7

If you had to change your lifestyle or face a horrible death, would you do it? How successful do you think you would be without a support system?

You might need recovery when...
your heart only pumps well in chaos.

Exercise 8

Are you able to express your emotions (see the Mood Chart in Part IV- page 63)? Do you use these words in your significant relationships? With your sponsor? Most people do not. Observe in your next meeting, how many people actually use feeling words? How comfortable are you using these words in your significant relationships? Remember in your addiction you used to hide from emotions, but in recovery and with the Mood Chart, you can now connect with the part of yourself you avoided for so long. Using the Mood chart and identifying your emotions is the opposite of your addiction. You now are able to manage and use what you formerly denied and were so terrified of experiencing. When you think of expressing your emotions, what feelings come out for you? List them here (use the Mood Chart).

Exercise 9

Prior to recovery, you probably used one or more of these addictions and/or compulsions: alcohol, drugs, food, sex, work, the lives of other people, etc. Here, addiction is defined as an “...**external solution for an internal problem.**” Describe what you have used before (and maybe still use) ... for “...external solution(s) for your internal problem(s)?” How successful did your external solution fix your internal problem?

Exercise 10

Are you fully using the program, making meetings, working with a sponsor, and reading the Big Book? Do you ask your Higher Power to keep you sober in the morning? Are you thankful at night? Are you working the steps? Where does your program need improvement as of this moment? **Specifically, what is keeping you from working the program worthy of your recovery?**

You might need recovery when...
you love to bring home stray cats and men,
convinced only you can rescue them.

Exercise 11

More importantly, think about the unmanageability of your life. Is it something worth returning to? Probably not, so before you again allow your “self-will to run riot,” know you need structure to see you through recovery. Allow yourself the discipline needed to be successful. If you do not have your recovery, what do you have? Probably, not much. Prior to recovery, how was your life running? Probably very chaotic. Your future requires you getting you back by putting your program first and keeping your self-will at bay. To accomplish that structure, you need discipline and the support of the recovery fellowship.

*“The 12-step chocolate program:
NEVER BE MORE THAN 12 STEPS
AWAY FROM CHOCOLATE!”
- Terry Moore*

Working the steps involves time, energy, commitment, desire, and willingness. Are you ready to put this into your change process? If so, then declare to yourself:

- I have the *desire* to complete this step.
- I have the *willingness*.
- With my recovery program, I have the *ability* to complete this step.

Somehow, by saying this aloud to yourself - what you want to believe – you have a better chance of these thoughts becoming yours ... your values ... your determination ... who you are. Write the goal(s) you declared in Exercise 1 in positive terms and *as if* you had already accomplished your goal. For example, if in Exercise 1 you said, “I want peace and serenity in my life,” change it to read:

- I am peaceful.
- I am serene.

Do the same for your desire, willingness, and ability (above). Write these out in your handwriting and paste them to your bathroom mirror. Every morning and every evening, as you look into the mirror, tell yourself these statements. By doing this, you are reprogramming your subconscious mind by telling yourself what you want to believe. It does

not matter that you believe – keep on saying them until they come true. ***Trust the process.***

Word of Warning

“It’s your life; you don’t need someone’s permission to live the life you want.”
- Roy T. Bennett

Others who are close to you may like the changes they see in you, but since you have hurt many or all of them in the past, they may not trust any positive change you make. You may be surprised to see doubt on their faces, disbelief in their heart, and fear in their eyes awaiting the other shoe to drop and for you to return to who you were before recovery. They have so long walked on eggshells around you; they no longer know how to walk differently. They may not acknowledge the changes you have made and are so proud of (remember addiction is a family disease). Allow others - in their own time - to believe in you again. Change your behavior, get your happiness back, and eventually, they will change. Do not allow others to deter you from your appointed date with recovery; your life may depend upon it.

Many of the old time AA members say, “My program is the most important thing in my life.” This is wise council, for it provides a truth your addiction does not want you to know. Recovery requires putting your program before your family, work, and even God.

*“Confront the dark parts of yourself,
and work to banish them with
illumination and forgiveness.”*
- August Wilson

Putting your program first seems selfish, mean-spirited, and heading in the wrong direction, but before you reject this sage advice, think about what you were before recovery. Did you really have your family, work, and a close connection with your Higher Power? Before recovery, did you not experience a lack of connection with yourself and others? Did you feel close to your creator? Self-improvement promises to be difficult, challenging, scary, and painful, but at the same time, a wonderful, fulfilling, empowering, and joyful experience. You will not regret the time you spend on making changes to your lifetime.

For many years, you felt disconnected from yourself. This was a painful awareness you tried to medicate with your addiction. Reconnecting with you is the cornerstone of a happy life. The greater the self-connection, the more you can connect with others. Make a decision to become an internal millionaire. In this enviable state, no one can take away your wealth or steal it, the IRS cannot tax it, and the people you love will receive your living inheritance. More importantly, think about the unmanageability of your life.

Is your old lifestyle something worth returning to? Of course not. So, before you again allow your “self-will to run riot,” you desperately need discipline and structure to help see you through recovery. If you do not have your recovery, you have nothing ... your future requires you getting you back; put your program first and await the results. A successful recovery program requires structure in order to change. The meetings are a form of structure and so is reading the Big Book and working with your sponsor. Working the steps with others is a wonderful structure. The slogans are another form of simple discipline your wounded soul needs to hear. This book, the Big Book, and many others are a form of structure. Allow yourself to use the discipline and tools that thousands of other recovery people have already discovered. These gifts are available to you to achieve the recovery you ardently desire, passionately seek, and most sincerely deserve.

The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs

Note: Alcoholic Anonymous has not sanctioned this workbook; the author is responsible for its contents. This excerpt from the *Alcoholics Anonymous* (reprinted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc (A.A.W.S.)). Permission to use this excerpt does not mean that A.A.W.S. is in any way affiliated with this program. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism only – use of this material in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after A.A., but which address other problems or concerns, or in any other non-A.A. context, does not imply otherwise.

There are as many ways to work the steps, as there are sponsors. *Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* seeks to provide the recovering community another method to assist anyone working these powerful steps.

Part III

Understanding the 4th Step

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

In order for any business to be successful, corporations have to know their financial condition. They do this by keeping inventory, balance sheets, profit and loss statements, etc. With today's computers, businesses have a daily accounting of their sales, what products remain on the shelf, and up-to-date profits – all necessary for making good business decisions.

To live successfully, people need this same inventory. At the end of the day, as heads meet pillows and rest comes to the weary, there must be a self-accounting, a self-reckoning ... an inventory taken. Was I true to my values? True to my word? To whom did my behavior disappoint? Where did I make a positive change in the world and where did I miss the mark? Where did I extend love and who did not receive my love? Whom do I need to thank and where am I holding resentments? Doing a daily inventory helps you with the most important task of the day, when you look in the mirror and reflect on how much respect you have for this face staring back at you.

With this knowledge, you realize your life is in such contrast to your true nature - who you think you are, but deep down, know you are not - this honest awareness is so overwhelming your denial comes to the rescue, protecting you from the truth. ***Delusions are born and cultivated when hiding from the truth.*** It is hard to hide from yourself when really looking into the self-examination mirror. Because it is so painful, you find a sheltering addiction to escape. In your acting out behavior, you can get away from who you really are, dull the truth, and dampen your misery. Examination does not come naturally. When living in chaos, the last thing you want to do is self-reflect, for knowing the truth would cause you even more pain.

Summing up the first three steps of the Twelve-Steps is: "I can't, He can; and I think I'll let Him." With this wonderful awareness, you are now ready to undo many levels of self-deception restricting the love you wish to give and receive.

Warning: making a “**fearless moral inventory**” is not easy. In order for a new reality to be yours, an honest confrontation of the truth must occur. When this reality is yours, exposed with all its ugliness, hurt, and rejection instead of being sugar coated with denial, it can be incredibly painful. Sadly, many leave recovery at the thought of doing the 4th Step. Maybe they are, as stated in the Big Book “...constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves...”. They may be sober from their addiction but are so emotionally drunk that they continue to allow fear to dictate their lives. The truth is, you are a good person who did wrong to others, especially those you love. Many times, you also were not true to yourself. For this, you carry the burden of shame. To heal these transgressions, you have to be honest, look yourself in the eye with objectivity, and then take responsibility. You can no longer blame your parents, society, spouse, or any person who abused, abandoned, or hurt you - wanting them to change so you could be okay. **Blame is the chain of bondage keeping you stuck in the false comfort of not being responsible for your own okayness.**

In the 4th Step, you are now ready to get honest, putting it all out on the line. Writing about your mistakes and seeing those transgressions in black and white often seems like a monstrous task. It is difficult to begin but necessary to achieve the peace and serenity that you have so long sought. As difficult and painful as the 4th Step is...**in order to be free** ... you have to get honest. You just have to do it. Together with the loving encouragement of your sponsor and Twelve-Step friends, this bridge is neither too long nor unsafe for you to cross. At the beginning of your journey, you looked across the bridge that seemed treacherous. However, once across and looking back, you will be shocked at how little actual blocking there was.

However, after listing your defects, you may forget one important step in this inventory. Once you get a list of all the transgressions, wrongs, and hurts you inflicted on the world, you may sigh with relief, wipe your hands together, and declare, “I’m done.” No, you are not yet finished. In order for the inventory to be complete, you have to enter another phase that probably will prove as challenging - with its own denial - as the first.

If you are fearless about your wrongs, then you must be fearless about what you did **correctly**. Start the list with what you like about yourself. What are your strengths?

What did you do well? Being honest about your weaknesses - you are good at that - and can spew them out like a volcanic eruption. When thinking of strengths, it is hard to be equally as honest. Didn't you learn from Grandma not to toot your own horn? Well, to gain the balance, my friend here is where life demands honesty, and tooting is not only justified but necessary.

Circle Theory

The Circle Theory is a wonderful method of understanding problems. You have lived in all areas from the pain of the Inner Circle to the occasional glimpse of the Outer Circle. In recovery, we take back the right to choose where we want to live.

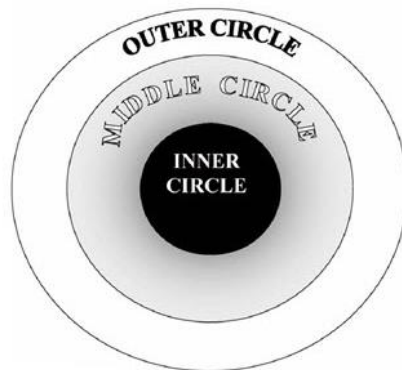
- **Inner Circle** - represents the unmanageability of your life – your addiction, character defects, shortcomings, acting out behavior, and hurts you inflicted on others. It is the danger area threatening your future. This is hazardous to what you want.
- **Middle Circle** – this is the slippery slope – temptations you have trouble resisting - if not careful, quicksand wanting to pull you into the swamp of despair. Many things may cause you to stumble and potentially slide into the Inner Circle.

Danger! ¡Peligro! Hebezneka! Periculum! Fara! Nebezpečí!

- **Outer Circle** healthy lifestyle – where recovery lives – relax, this is where you live happy, joyous, and free.

Middle Circle

Anything that gets you close to relapse



Inner Circle

- Addictions
- Acting out behavior
- Resentments
- Hurting others
- Character defects
- Anything causing you to lie

Outer Circle

- Healthy behavior
- Love
- Courage
- Helping others

Exercise 12

What belongs in your Inner Circle?

Exercise 13

Middle Circle – what do you allow to put you in a precarious position where you are tempted to act out? Describe your slippery slope. What can cause you to slide into the Inner Circle if you are not careful? What has the potential to suck you into the dark inner circle?

If you don't speak it out ... *you tend to act it out!*

Exercise 14

Outer Circle - Smile as you think of the joy of the wonderful good things in your own Outer Circle. Start a gratitude list of the bounty of your Outer Circle.

What would you like to start including in your Outer Circle?

Note: The Publications Manager ISO of SAA, Inc. <http://saa-recovery.org/> provided permission to use the Inner Circle Diagram.

*“Courage is being scared to death,
but saddling up anyway.”
- John Wayne*

Exercise 15

What is your greatest asset? Answer this question before continuing.

Your great desire to express love may be one of your strengths. However, any strength when overused becomes a weakness. How often have you attempted to express love but what others received did not feel like love to them but control, manipulation, anger, pain, and/or rejection. There are several reasons for a positive inventory. You were out of balance in your addiction. Your personal inventory needs to have balance to develop the entire picture – balancing the black with the white, the yin and yang, good and bad, your defects as well as assets.

Another reason for the positive inventory is because ***your addiction will use your greatest strength against you!*** However, once the entire inventory is before you, clarity becomes yours, and a sense of balance is achieved that would be unavailable without this knowledge. You will discover many of the problems you created stem from your addiction using your wonderful, God-given talents against you, not all the time, but enough. In this case, your addiction turns these over-used strengths into a weakness. Your addiction is “...cunning, baffling, and powerful.” So, conning it is successful in turning your strengths into weakness but as powerful as it has been, remember, ***you are still responsible***. “Being responsible” is both a blessing and a curse. Addictions encourage irresponsibility, and becoming the victim is a sad reality. However, when people act responsibly, they are liberated – free to choose the degree of happiness desired.

The difference between Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous is small, but significant. The Al-Anon person living with addiction (drugs, alcohol, etc.), out of their desire to help the addict, focuses on someone else - so much in fact, they neglect themselves. They take responsibilities they do not own. They own other people’s feelings, not their own. They live lives based upon what they think other people may think. Conversely, addictive people are so good at focusing on themselves that their addiction creates a tunnel vision of self-will, without bounds or restraint.

In recovery, the co-dependents must transform this wonderful ability to care for others and refocus that energy into taking care of themselves. When traveling on a commercial airline, one of the standard announcements is “...in the unlikely event of cabin depressurization, oxygen masks will fall from the ceiling. If you are traveling with small children, put yours on first.” Why should the traveler put these on first? Co-dependents tend to focus so much on others to the exclusivity of self-care and pay a price. The opposite is true with an addictive person. The addict is so inwardly focused it becomes pathological, an obsession of selfishness that the Big Book calls, “...self-will run riot.” To overcome this weakness, addictive people learn to do for others and focus on service work. In both examples, their greatest strength worked against them. Their ***best qualities when overused, ultimately, became weaknesses***. You probably will discover paradoxes

like this when you do your inventory. You may find that some of your exact traits you dislike the most, turn out to be your strengths being overused.

When you become responsible for your behavior, you now see the world through the clear prism of reality; the truth shines bright and becomes your guide. To realize this understanding, the whole truth must be uncovered, and this includes character defects and transgressions, as well as your positive qualities. Once this difficult task is completed, you are ready to accept the energy gained from working on this step.

You might need recovery when...
your life is like a dirty diaper,
you'd change it but now...
you're just used to it.

4th Step Prayer

Give me the willingness to accept
Myself, *even* with my inventory.

Give me the courage to see myself
as I am, *even* with my defects,
and the willingness to accept
the forgiveness is already there.

Exercise 16

Have you taken responsibility for behaviors and/or feelings really belonging to another?
Describe some results.

Exercise 17

Looking at the 4th Step, how can you make this into a turning point? Describe this turning point.

Exercise 18

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.” When you think about working the 4th Step, what are your feelings (use the Mood Chart found on page 63). Do a searching and fearless inventory on your feelings concerning doing the 4th Step inventory.

*“Recovery is something that you have
to work on every single day and
it doesn't get a day off.”
— Demi Lovato*

Exercise 19

Would others describe you as controlling? If so, what does your controlling look like? Would letting go of controlling others be hard to do? How are you going to accomplish this goal? Who do you control? Who considers you controlling? Who do you have a hard time letting go?

Exercise 20

Boundaries are knowing where you stop and others begin, or others stop and you begin. What boundaries do you cross that belong to others? What reactions happen when you violate another's? What boundaries do you allow others to cross? What is your normal reaction to boundary jumpers? What do you need to do to improve this understanding?

You might need recovery when...
you are so wishy-washy you make
Charlie Brown look decisive.

Exercise 21

Detachment- do you have difficulty separating yourself from the agony of another's chaotic life? Do you own other people's problems? Do you focus on fixing other people's problems, often to the detriment of yourself? What do you need to do to improve?

Exercise 22

Make a list of the most important things in your life.

When you finish, where are you on that list? Is your position healthy or not? Where do you belong? What is your correct position? You, and only you, determine your position on this list. Note: As you mature in the program, your answer may change over time. Give yourself permission to explore.

*“Love is not an emotional attachment.
Love is being complete without needing
to have another person by your side.”*
Cloris Kylie

Exercise 23

Where do you see yourself pointing your finger at another, expecting them to change so you can be okay? Who or what is the cause of your misery – who have you blamed? Where do you see yourself as a victim? Is it difficult for you to point your thumbs and be responsible? How difficult is it for you to be responsible? What would happen in your life if, instead of pointing your finger at others, you pointed your thumbs at yourself and focused on your part of the problem?

*“The only person you can now or ever change is yourself.
The only person that it is your business to control is yourself.”*
- Melody Beattie

Exercise 24

At night for at least one week, think of the answers to these questions:

- Was I true to my values and myself?
- Whom did I harm and whom do I disappoint?
- Where did I make a positive change in the world?
- Where did I miss this opportunity?
- Where did I extend love and who still has not received my love?
- What improvements do I need to make?
- Whom do I need to thank and where am I holding resentments?

After doing this exercise every night for a week, what have you learned?

Exercise 25

How much respect do you have for the person in the mirror staring back at you? How can you increase the respect you have for yourself? Can you see yourself ever loving that person in the mirror again?

Exercise 26

Think about separating a person from their behavior. A person's behavior may be deplorable, but the person is a child of the universe deserving love and respect - just like you. A person is different than his/her behavior and getting them mixed up often causes friction, resentment, and chaos. Instead, be hard on problems, and gentle on people. How difficult is it going to be to separate the person from their behavior? Write about how difficult it may be to separate yourself, as a worthwhile and good person, from your behavior.

Exercise 27

It is so easy to point the finger at something other than ourselves and blame. Who or what have you been blaming for your misery, your problems, and your own lack of happiness? How can you get your power back and become responsible?

“When you give another person the power to define you, then you also give them the power to control you.”
- Leslie Vernick

Exercise 28

Look back to Exercise 11 and write again, what is your greatest strength?

Remember your addiction will use your greatest strength against you. How has your addiction used your strength against you? How can you get your greatest strength back in balance? Describe other areas where your addiction may be misusing your positive qualities to keep you in bondage?

Exercise 29

Describe what happens when you let your *fears chase your dreams away*. How did you allow this to happen? What do you need to change? Are you managing your fears or allowing them to control your life?

You might need recovery when...
you are so vain you think your
spark set off the Big Bang.

Exercise 30

4th Step - Making a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

Before you begin this inventory, go back to Exercise 7 and review the feelings you listed. What are the most powerful emotions you listed, which ones have the most energy? Which ones did you try to hide from when in your addiction? List any additional feelings that came up when thinking about your inventory (Look on the Mood Chart on page 63).

In the Glad Column, what feelings did you find there? Let's assume its hope. Become a human balancing scale and review some of the other strong emotions. Let's assume fear is on your list, so put the hope in one hand and fear in the other. Which hand weighs the most? Is there more hope or more fear? As the balancing scale, your hands are probably out of balance, and often, it is the fear weighing the most. If so, fear is what you have to go through if you wish to accomplish this step and claim the hope. ***You can do this.***

Think about what Mike Z. has to say about his recovery.

“As an alcoholic, I have a lot of black and white thinking. Things are either all right, or they are all wrong – there is very little in between. Before I got sober, this kind of thinking was a big handicap in my life. If I didn’t do something perfectly, then I considered myself a failure that day – and for all the days in the future, as well. If something didn’t go right, I just gave up and became resentful. By the end of my drinking, I learned to not even try any more.

When I entered recovery and looked at the Twelve Steps for the first time, I secretly gave myself thirty days to do them. If they didn’t work, then I was going back out. When I finally got a sponsor, he told me we would work a Step a month. “What?!” was my reaction. He asked me how long I had been drinking, and I told him years. He told me I didn’t get to my bottom in thirty days, and that I wouldn’t recover that quickly either. He told me to consider sobriety as “slowbriety.”

As I worked through the Steps, one of the defects of character I discovered I had was perfectionism. As I slowly wrote a fearless and thorough Fourth-Step inventory, I realized I hid behind the unrealistic ideal of perfection to escape the messy and difficult work of progress. When my sponsor pointed out that in the program we strive for “progress not perfection,” it released me from my obsession and allowed me to grow, to keep trying, and to value and appreciate the progress I was making. I finally learned that if I failed today, I could learn from it and try again tomorrow.”

Included with permission of the Wisdom of the Rooms. April 10, 2017

Exercise 31

Make a fearless 4th Step inventory about the harm you did to others. Your regrets. Your shame. This is hard, but you've been expecting this – ***you can do this.***

Apple of Freedom

At birth, humans received a gift, the “apple of freedom,” what we call “free will.” On your spiritual journey, what you know, what you learn about yourself, and your relationship to the creative force will change and evolve over time. Here are some questions to consider. Does your Higher Power have you on spiritual strings manipulating your behavior? Is your Higher Power looking into a crystal ball ready to answer your smallest prayers? Some believe it is so, and some do not.

Is your Higher Power like the Greek god, Zeus, sending down lightning bolts to cause catastrophic events? Does your HP decree when tragic or untimely deaths occur? Is there a heavenly list and when your time is up - you die? Does your HP will these events to happen? On the other hand, do tragic events happen because of laws of nature or the law of averages? Does the God of your understanding intentionally pluck someone from this earth in the prime of life? These are questions only you can answer, as you develop a God or god of your understanding.

What would it be like to live your life in the wonderful world of gray of acceptance? Here one resides between the extremes of black and white thinking, exploring the gray.

Part of that acceptance requires an understanding that living is hard - life and death are part of this experience. Part of that acceptance is that you are responsible for your actions. You have a choice. You can make good decisions, demonstrate love, and live a life benefitting others, or you can allow your own “self-will to run riot” as stated in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. ***You are the sum total of the decisions you made so far in your life.***

Your experience painfully taught you - self-will without limits causes harm. The poem *Apple of Freedom* acknowledges the choice your Higher Power presents to you. It is your decision whether to return to your spiritual home or not.

“...two questions ... 'Where am I going?' and
‘Who will go with me?’ If you ever get
these questions in the wrong
order you are in trouble.”
- Sam Keen

Apple of Freedom

Obtaining the forbidden fruit
the apple of freedom
Eden's Serpent promised,
 "Eat this fruit.
 Knowledge will be yours."

From the garden's apple,
we obtained the ultimate truth
making us different from the animals ...
this knowledge of right and wrong.

The privilege of this freedom
which truth is ours to see,
we have paid the ultimate price ...
a separation from our creator.

And as a child of Adam and Eve,
the wind makes a lonesome howl
blowing through the hole in my soul ...
a void within my being.

Can I ignore my internal struggle?
And in the cool of the garden's evening
cover myself with life's fig leaves ...
Hiding me from who I am?

Freedom has given me a choice
doing what is right or wrong
a decision only I can make ...
How will I live my life?

Until I face the emptiness in my soul
and know this spirit within me,
I have not yet begun to live,
nor touched the face of God.

This poem comes from the book: *Professor of Pain*
Amazon.com

Exercise 32

4th Step - Making a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

Make a fearless inventory about the times you tried to do the right thing, but instead of extending the love you wished to give, you caused harm to someone you cared about. This is hard, but you've been expecting this – ***you can do this.***

*“By choosing recovery and risking to be real,
we set the healthy boundaries that say,
‘I am in charge of my recovery and my life,
and no one else on this Earth is.’”
- Charles L. Whitfield*

Exercise 33

What are your redeeming qualities? What are your strengths?

Exercise 34

Use the right side of your brain (your creative side) and visualize an image of your 4th Step. It may be a picture, a word, a symbol, anything you wish to represent what you now face and struggle to overcome and/or accept.

Exercise 35 – optional exercise

Using the White Bison Native American view of the steps, they are laws of change.

How are these laws working in your recovery?

The Four Laws of Change:

- Change is from within
- It must be preceded by a vision
- A great learning must take place
- You must create a Healing Forest

Dear Friend,

Even with all your shortcomings,
your character defects,
and the hurts you caused,
you are worthy of love.

Right now –

as you are!

Part IV

Emotions

What is the definition of *cool*? *Cool* means “to not show emotions, not express deep feelings, and without the honesty afforded by full expression of your emotions, creating a high degree of dishonesty.” When you drank, took drugs, and/or controlled others, you successfully hid from your emotions. You were by this definition cool, -*Olympic-caliber cool*! When in an altered state, completely divorced from your emotions, you achieved the ultimate of *cool*. Did being *cool* work for you?

In her book, *Positivity*, Dr. Barbara Fredrickson describes emotions like sailing. Positive emotions are the winds in the sail. Negative emotions are different; they are the keel that extends down from the hull allowing the sailboat to tack against the wind. Without the wind, sailboats are becalmed and do not move. Without the keel, the sailor could not follow the plotted course and only head on one direction. Both types of emotions are necessary.

When hiding, ignoring, stuffing, or denying emotions, a person is helpless against the winds of this world. Using emotions correctly allows for progress in the direction the sailor desires. Are you going to continue to allow the chaos winds to blow you all over the ocean, or are you going to learn to sail?

Contrary to Dr. Fredrickson, describing emotions as positive or negative is incorrect. Since you have them and need them to navigate, how can they be positive or negative? Instead, they just are. Consider this different terminology. The so-called negative emotions are really for *warning*, and positive emotions are the *healing* feelings. May the *healing* emotions fill your sails and may the gift of *warning* protect you as you journey.

Where do your feelings come from? Where do your emotions originate? Your feelings, your emotions come from how you think. Think differently, and you will feel differently. The 12-Step program helps you think differently, and as your thoughts change from selfishness to openness, your feelings change.

Using this chart and identifying your emotions is the opposite of your addiction. In recovery, you now are able to manage and use what you formerly denied and were so terrified of experiencing. You are now able to be free.

Mood Chart

MAD	GLAD	SAD	FEAR	HURT
Agitation	Admiration	Abandoned	Alarm	Aloof
Angry	Affection	Agonized	Anxious	Ashamed
Annoyed	Ardor	Bored	Apprehension	Belittled
Antagonism	Confident	Crushed	Bashful	Burdened
Arrogant	Cordiality	Deflated	Bewildered	Cheated
Bitter	Curiosity	Depressed	Cautious	Contempt
Contempt	Delight	Disconnected	Confused	Denied
Defiant	Desire	Disparaged	Distraction	Deserted
Disapproving	Devotion	Distant	Dread	Disappointed
Disdain	Ecstasy	Distraught	Embarrassed	Dismay
Disgust	Ecstatic	Distressed	Envious	Embarrassed
Enraged	Elation	Downcast	Evasive	Exhausted
Frustrated	Enthusiasm	Forlorn	Fearful	Guilty
Furious	Excitement	Gloomy	Flustered	Humiliated
Hostile	Fervor	Grieving	Frightened	Insulted
Indignant	Flush	Helpless	Horried	Lonely
Irritated	Generosity	Hopeless	Hysterical	Mean
Livid	Happy	Ignored	Inadequate	Pain
Mischievous	Hope	Isolated	Insecure	Pained
Rage	Hopeful	Jealous	Menacing	Regret
Resentful	Inspiration	Melancholy	Overwhelmed	Shame
	Love-Struck	Miserable	Panic	Suffering
	Passion	Mournful	Pathos	Shocked

You might need recovery when...
 loud, obnoxious drunks make
 you feel embarrassed.

About the Author

David W. Earle, LPC is a mental health counselor helping clients with anger management, substance abuse, compulsive gambling, eating disorders, anxiety, depression, and relationships. When he combines his Licensed Professional Counselor skills with his twenty-plus years of executive management experience, he conducts business coaching, a powerful matrix for transferring leadership skills. He is also a teacher, trainer, author, coach, and alternative dispute professional.

Earle earned a Master of Science from Texas A&M and has held executive management positions in various fields including industrial construction, private investment banking, and corporate troubleshooting. He is now the president of the Earle Company, an organization dedicated to change.

He has published six books - three self-help books: *Love is Not Enough* (Changing Dysfunctional Family Habits), *Simple Communications for Complicated People* (Communication Made Simple), *What To Do While You Count To 10* (Management of Strong Emotions); and a trilogy of recovery poetry: *Professor of Pain* (A Lesson Before Living), *Iron Mask* (Peace Is Your Birthright), and *Red Roses 'n Pinstripes* (Despair to Meaning). He is writing a series of workbooks: *The Wisdom of the Twelve Steps*. These workbooks help recovery people work through the Twelve Steps. He has co-authored three books - two on leadership: *Leadership-Helping Others Succeed* and *Extreme Leadership*, and a joke book entitled, *You Might Need a Therapist If...* His autobiography is *Contents of a Small Boy's Pocket*. *Mr. Buster and the Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* is his first children's book and he is working on *Mr. Buster and the Red Ball of Anger* due the spring of 2024.

Earle has been on the panel as a mediator and/or arbitrator for various organizations such as U.S. Federal Court-Middle District, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Financial Industry Regulator Authority (FINRA), Natural Futures Association (NFA), Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), and the Louisiana Supreme Court. He was on the faculty of the University of Phoenix for over 10 years.

His trademarked motto is *My Life Will Change... When I Change™*; he enjoys tennis, and he lives in Baton Rouge with his wife, Penny.

Suggested Reading

*“I used to think a drug addict was someone who
lived on the far edges of society, wild-eyed,
shaven-headed and living in a filthy squat.
That was until I became one...”*
- Cathryn Kemp

7 Habits of Highly Effective People - Stephen R. Covey
Anger - Thich Nhat Hanh
Beyond the Relaxation Response - Hebert Benson. M.D.
Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous - Bill Wilson
Codependency No More - Melody Beattie
Getting to Yes - William L Ury, Roger Fister, Bruce M. Patton
I'm Ok – You're Ok - Thomas A. Harros, M.D.
Just Listen - Mark Goulston
Learning to Love Yourself - Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse
Love - Leo Buscaglia
Man's Search for Meaning - Viktor E. Frankl
The Magic of Conflict - Thomas F. Crum
The Power of Now - Eckhart Tolle
The Way of the Wizard - Deepak Chopra
Understanding Co-Dependency - Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse
Wake UP! - Tom Owen-Towle
Wisdom of the Rooms - Mike Z.

“Books may well be the only true magic.”
– Alice Hoffman

Request

The *Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* is a work in progress. Nothing is perfect, and this workbook will always need improvement. If you have suggestions or improvements, I want to hear your thoughts, or if you have a good story - relating to any of the steps – contact me at earlecompany@cox.net.

You might need recovery when...
you are so overly responsible you are sure
you caused WWII, the Berlin Wall,
Spanish Inquisition, and
the stock market crash.

Dedication

For many years, I learned from various 12-Step meetings, personal sharing, and the warmth of good friendship over coffee. This series is the collective wisdom remembered over thirty-plus years of recovery.

I wish to thank the Twelve-Step fellowship where this author learned the profound wisdom included in this workbook. Without your attendance, there would be no meetings. Thanks for showing up so I could learn these principals. Following the footsteps of many before you, you too can obtain serenity from *living happy, joyous, and free*.

Many people contributed to this workbook. I would like to recognize several recovery people who contributed their wisdom to this series. They are: Jack C., two different John W.'s., Chuck H., Joan M., Sam S., Connie M., Janet R., Jimmy C., Gwyn B., Ted B., Chris C., Chuck S., Yolinda M., Tammy S., Kim C., Laci T., and Mark B.

I want to thank my sisters, Connie Murphy, for her professional editing and Melissa Zraik for her formatting and final editing prowess. Special thanks has to go to Penny, my bride of many years, and it was only through her support and editing that this book could be created.

*“Depression weighs you down like a rock in a river.
You’ll never know true happiness until someone
or something pulls you back out of that river—
and you’ll never believe it until you realize
it was you, yourself who saved you.”*
- Alysha Speer

Appendix A: WISDOM OF THE TWELVE STEPS – 4th STEP

Directions: To receive credits for this course, you are required to take a post test and receive a passing score. We have set a minimum standard of 80% as the passing score to assure the highest standard of knowledge retention and understanding. The test is comprised of multiple choice and/or true/false questions that will investigate your knowledge and understanding of the materials found in this CEU Matrix – The Institute for Addiction and Criminal Justice distance learning course.

After you complete your reading and review of this material, you will need to answer each of the test questions. Then, submit your test to us for processing. This can be done in the following manner:

Submit your test via the Internet. All of our tests are posted electronically, allowing immediate test results and quicker processing. First, you may want to answer your post test questions found at the end of this appendix. Then, return to your browser and go to the Student Center located at:

<http://www.ceumatrix.com/studentcenter>

Once there, log in as a Returning Customer using your Email Address and Password. Then click on 'View Lesson Quiz' and you will be presented with the electronic exam.

To take the exam, simply select from the choices of "a" through "e" for each multiple choice question. For true/false questions, select either "a" for true, or "b" for false. Once you are done, simply click on the submit button at the bottom of the page. Your exam will be graded and you will receive your results immediately. If your score is 80% or greater, you will receive a link to the course evaluation. You will also receive a link to the Certificate of Completion. This is the final step in the process, and you may save and / or print your Certificate of Completion.

If, however, you do not achieve a passing score of at least 80%, you will need to review the course material and return to the Student Center to resubmit your answers.

NOTE: THE EXAM QUESTIONS AND /OR ANSWERS MAY BE IN A DIFFERENT ORDER IN THE ONLINE EXAM

Answer the following questions by selecting the most appropriate response.

•

1. All addictions are the symptoms of:
 - a) family of origin abuse
 - b) genetic manipulation
 - c) different way of thinking
 - d) being bullied
2. All addictions share the same mechanism they are
 - a) effective
 - b) destructive
 - c) external solutions to internal problems
 - d) geographical solutions
3. Addictions are very effective at separating (best answer)
 - A. parents to children
 - B. addicts from freedom
 - C. have from have nots
 - D. the addict from pain
4. This workbook is effective for
 - a) Alcohol
 - b) Drugs addiction
 - c) Compulsive gambling
 - d) Eating disorders
 - e) Sex addiction
 - f) Compulsive shopping
 - g) All of the above
6. You are the sum product of the _____ you have already made.
 - a) Lessons
 - b) Money
 - c) Decisions

7. The focus of a 12-step program is thinking differently resulting in a different way of living.

- a) True
- b) False

8. Addicts choose their drug of choice because they _____ (best answer).

- a) Work
- b) Easy
- c) Plentiful
- d) powerful

9. Addictions are successful at _____ the person from the pain, unsettling emotions, and deep hurts.

- a) sparing
- b) subsidizing
- c) separating
- d) insulating

9. Sponsors usually do not want to use *The Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* workbooks.

- a) True
- b) False

10. Entering recovery, most people do **not** believe this program can help. In the story, **Thumb Work**, the man attending the speaker's meeting was only attending because he was instructed to but doubted, he would gain anything. He was focused on other people who needed to be there instead of him. This is a very uncommon thought pattern.

- a) True
- b) False

11. Many families have self-imposed rules that are NOT _____ or _____ but everyone knows them and religiously follows them, such as the *No-talk* rule.

- a) decided, understood, or questioned
- b) declared, explained, or questioned
- c) ruled, explained, or agreed to

12. The speaker knew because she loved her husband, she **could** still live with him despite his drinking.

- a) True
- b) False

13. The speaker knew she was not strong enough to live with his disease.
a) True
b) False

14. One belief a codependent has is thinking all they have to do is just trust enough and all will turn out okay.
a) True
b) False

15. Doing the 4th step exercise, the speaker woke up to her need to work on herself.
a) True
b) False

16. What was the first clue the speaker had that she was not a healthy person? "When I started looking at me, I discovered I was not a healthy person. My first clue ... look who I married ... an alcoholic".
a) True
b) False

17. The speaker thought a wife's job was to _____ her husband and she needed to do it perfectly. In recovery, she learned differently.
a) help
b) support
c) fix
d) fight

18. The speaker found escape in work.
a) True
b) False

19. Big Book said, "Acceptance seldom solves all my problems."
a) True
b) False

20. In the speaker's addiction, acceptance meant _____ his behavior therefore condoning his drinking. So, to her acceptance meant condoning.
a) understanding
b) encouraging
c) enduring
d) condoning

21. The speaker learned that to live with active addiction, she needed strong boundaries.

- a) True
- b) False

22. Even in her addiction, the speaker couldn't always identify her _____ and was not effective in defending them.

- a) Coping skills
- b) Strength
- c) Boundaries
- d) responsibilities

23. The behavior of the speaker's husband was often deplorable and unacceptable, but she learned that God would punish him so she did not have to.

- a) True
- b) False

24. Detachment is "...not detaching from the person but from the _____ of involvement."

- a) pain
- b) injustice
- c) pain
- d) agony

25. The speaker lived with her husband for almost _____ years and had no regrets about staying with him.

- a) Forty
- b) three
- c) twenty
- d) fifty

Before Beginning

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this section, participants will be able to:

- Understanding the resistance to a personal Higher Power
- Using the power of thinking about your thinking
- Giving self-permission to allow natural wisdom to appear.
- Appreciating the motivating effect of pain
- Becoming aware of how a person's addict voice affects recovery.

26. Working the 12 Steps will create change.

- a) True
- b) False

27. Some find this practice of capitalizing the words "God" and "Higher Power" restrictive as it recalls certain definitions found in religion.

- a) True
- b) False

28. In Steps 4, 5, and 6 – a person can discover themselves returning them from the edge of extinction into the joy of life.

- a) True
- b) False

29. Working a program allows a person to connect with the collective _____ of the universe.

- a) sponsors
- b) plenty
- c) satisfaction
- d) wisdom

30. The program and the workbook *The Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* help start the process of **thinking about your thinking**. The more a person is aware of their thinking, the more successful the decision.

- a) True
- b) False

31. The first three steps change hope into belief. In the meetings, people see their hope blossom into belief. Many start this process - sadly, many do not finish. Failures create a powerful question:

- a) How free do you want to be?
- b) How can a person be so weak?
- c) Why do I make such bad decisions?
- d) I can't overcome my dysfunctional family experience.

32. People entering recovery stand at a _____ for any decision they make will affect many others.

- a) dilemma
- b) Clift
- c) hockey stick
- d) crossroads

33. The workbook suggests readers work on the answer to one of Steven Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People characteristics. Which one?

- a) Begin with the end in mind.
- b) First things first
- c) Be proactive
- d) Synergize!

34. John Bradshaw describes codependency as "the loss of _____."

- a) position
- b) status
- c) life
- d) selfhood

35. Many people have already pioneered a simple yet powerful method of recovery, called:

- a) Twelve Steps.
- b) Rational recovery
- c) Psychodynamics
- d) Family dynamics

36. "Hear the words, experience the wisdom of others, accept what you intuitively know to be true, and change can be yours. You already have the ability, once you realize the power is within you...trust the process." The Twelve Steps create a pathway that allows natural wisdom to appear.

- a) True
- b) False

37. Change is hard. Which is NOT a necessary tool for change?

- a. sponsor
- b. 12-Step meetings
- c. tuition
- d. self-help literature
- e. AA literature

38. Melody Beattie says, "*Worrying, obsessing, and controlling are _____.*"

- a. illusions."
- b. resentful."
- c. necessary."
- d. counterproductive."

39. Pain does not motivate humans to change.

- c) True
- d) False

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40. When the pain's motivation is gone, some think this temporary relief is all they need and stop working a 12-step program.

- a) True
- b) False

41. Many want the many benefits of a Twelve-Step program but look for an "easier, softer way?" This happens when a person's _____ speaks, and they listen.

- a) addictive voice
- b) mind chatter
- c) mother-in-law
- d) dysfunction

42. The addictive part of you is so _____, it will talk you into anything.

- a) cunning, powerful, and baffling
- b) seductive, recognized, and convincing
- c) cunning, seductive, and baffling
- d) cunning, convincing, and habit

43. A person's *addict voice* ceases to have the power it once had by saying the goals aloud.

- a) True
- b) False

44. "Your 12-Step journey has been and will continue to be revealing, unsettling, fearful, and often painful, but necessary for healing. One 12-step slogan is, "We are as _____. This is so very true, and with this step, we begin to become real. *We begin to heal.*

- a) *true to our word*
- b) *sick as our secrets*
- c) *fit as a fiddle.*
- d) *beginning to live*

45. "As fearful as the 4th Step is, you are in control. You can close the door to your shame closet anytime you feel overwhelmed. Open your hand and expose your shame to the light. You may fear this step and with good reason. Opening your hands reveals the truth. You allow the sunlight to radiant upon what was once darkness, and you see the sun's healing effects on what you once thought so dominant. Using the shame closet as your analogy, you are in control.

- a) True
- b) False

46. The 4th, 5th, and 6th Steps are simple ... simple ... *but not easy*.

- a) True
- b) False

47. Addictive people tend to hide or medicate their emotions. Using the feeling language connects them with a part of themselves avoided for so long.

- a) True
- b) False

48. Before recovery, people often use one or more of these addictions and/or compulsions: alcohol, drugs, food, sex, work, the lives of other people, etc. In *the Wisdom of the Twelve Steps*, addiction is defined as an "....."

- a) *external solution for living the good life*
- b) *external solution to solve my problems today*
- c) *external solution for an internal problem*
- d) *external solution for reducing stress*

49. Working the steps involves time, energy, money, commitment, desire, and willingness.

- a) True
- b) False

50. Many of the old-time AA members say, "My program is the most important thing in my life." This is wise counsel, for it provides a truth your addiction does not want you to know. Recovery requires putting your program before your _____.

- a) family,
- b) work
- c) God
- d) All the above

51. A successful recovery program requires structure to change. The meetings are a form of structure and so is reading the Big Book and working with your sponsor. Working the steps with others is a wonderful structure. The slogans are another simple discipline your wounded soul needs to hear. The Big Book and many other self-help readings are a form of structure. If a recovery person does not have recovery, they have nothing ... their future requires them to return to themselves, putting their program first and awaiting the results.

- a) True
- b) False

Understanding the 4th Step

Learning Objectives

- Upon completing this section, participants will be able to:
- Appreciate the necessity of honesty in the recovery process.
- Using the Circle Theory as a method of understanding problems
- Appreciating the necessity of boundary setting in the change process

52. Honesty can be so overwhelming that a person's denial then comes to the rescue, protecting them from the truth. _____ ***are born and cultivated when hiding from the truth.*** Best answer

- a) addiction
- b) resentments
- c) heartache
- d) delusions

53. When living in chaos, the last thing a person wants to do is self-reflect, for knowing the truth would cause them even more pain. However - in recovery - examination comes naturally.

- a) True
- b) False

54. Summing up the first three steps of the Twelve Steps is: "I can't, He can; and I think I'll let Him."

- a) True
- b) False

55. Self-deception tends to restrict the love a person wishes to give and receive.

- a) True
- b) False

56. For a new reality to begin, an honest confrontation of the truth must occur. However, making a "fearless moral inventory" is not easy.

- a) True
- b) False

57. When doing a 4th Step a person finds that many times, they were not true to themselves creating the burden of (best answer)

- a) caring
- b) hatred
- c) shame
- d) loneliness

58, "To heal these transgressions, you have to be honest, look yourself in the eye with objectivity, and then take responsibility. You can no longer blame your parents, society, spouse, or any person who abused, abandoned, or hurt you - wanting them to change so you could be okay. " _____ is the chain of bondage keeping you stuck in the false comfort of not being responsible for your okayness."

- a) shame
- b) blame
- c) resentment
- d) codependency

59. Although difficult to begin, to achieve the peace and serenity so long sought a person does not have to be completely honest to be free.

- a) True
- b) False

60. When working on the 4th Step, many forget one important part of this inventory. When being fearless about wrongdoings, a person should also be fearless about what they did **correctly**.

- a) True
- b) False

61. The Circle Theory is a wonderful method of understanding problems. The various areas represent:

1. The Inner Circle – healthy lifestyle – where recovery lives.
2. Outer Circle - unmanageability of a person's life.
3. Middle Circle – slippery slope – temptations

Which is **not** correct:

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 1 & 3
- e) 2 & 3

62. Your great desire to express love may be one of your strengths. However, any strength when overused becomes a weakness.

- a) True
- b) False

63. Often people attempt to express love but what others receive does not feel like love to them but control, manipulation, anger, pain, and/or rejection. A person's 4th Step needs to have balance to develop the entire picture. Another reason for the positive inventory is that *your addiction will use your greatest strength against you!*

- a) control
- b) manipulation
- c) anger
- d) pain
- e) rejection
- f) all the above

64. The difference between AI-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous is AI-Anon is for co-addictive people living with addiction and out of their desire to help the addict, they focus on others - especially their significant other - so much in fact, they _____. AA, NA, etc. are for addictive people who are so good at focusing on themselves that their addiction creates a tunnel vision of self-will, without bounds or restraint. Therefore, participants in an AI-Anon program focus on taking care of others, and people attending AA, NA, etc. focus on taking care of themselves.

- a) Commit suicide
- b) Start drinking
- c) Neglect themselves
- d) Change locations

65. When a person becomes _____ for their behavior, they see the world through the clear prism of reality; the truth then shines bright and becomes their guide.

- a) tolerant
- b) responsible
- c) disgusted
- d) humiliate

66. In the 4th Step Prayer it encourages recovery people to have the willingness to accept _____.

- a) the forgiveness already there
- b) the courage to start over
- c) others who have harmed you
- d) a concept of Higher Power

67. A boundary is the _____ of knowing where you stop and others begin, or others stop, and you begin.

- a) trust
- b) maturity
- c) awareness
- d) recovery

68. Some have difficulty separating themselves from the agony of another's chaotic life and tend to own other people's problems. What is needed in this case is _____.

- a) resentment
- b) anger
- c) detachment
- d) love

69. Change happens when a person ceases to point fingers at others and instead points a thumb at themselves.

- a) True
- b) False

70. A person is different from their _____ and getting them mixed up causes friction, resentment, and chaos. Instead, be hard on problems, and gentle on people.

- a) history
- b) behavior
- c) children
- d) feelings

71. A person's fears can chase dreams away.

- a) True
- b) False

72. If one imagines a balancing scale and puts the *fear* of recovery in one hand and the *hope* of recovery in the other, it is usually the fear that holds the strongest emotion.

- a) True
- b) False

73. According to Mike Z., many people hid behind the unrealistic ideal of perfection to escape the messy and difficult work of progress. The slogan "progress not _____," releases people from this obsession allowing for growth.

- a) hurt
- b) understanding
- c) negativity
- d) perfection

74. Many people have different concepts of a higher power, and some have very rigid beliefs that restrict other awareness. In acceptance, a person resides between the extremes of black-and-white thinking, exploring the _____.

- a) Blue
- b) Red
- c) Grey
- d) Pink

75. A person is **never** the sum of the decisions they make.

- a) True
- b) False

76. Personal experience teaches people that self-will _____ causes harm.

- a) without limits
- b) without truth
- c) without ethics

Appendix

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this section, participants will be able to:

- Understanding the relationship of emotions and addictions

Emotions

77 *Cool* means "_____afforded by full expression of emotions, creates a high degree of dishonesty." By this definition drug addicts/alcoholics are *Olympic-caliber cool*!

- a) to not show emotions,
- b) not express deep feelings
- c) without honesty
- d) all the above

78. Dr. Fredrickson correctly described emotions as positive or negative.

- a) True
- b) False

CEU Matrix

Course Evaluation – Hard Copy Format

The final step in the process required to obtain your course certificate is to complete this course evaluation. These evaluations are used to assist us in making sure that the course content meets the needs and expectations of our students. Please fill in the information completely and include any comments in the spaces provided. **If you submit your evaluation online, you do not need to return this form.**

NAME: _____

COURSE TITLE: **Wisdom of the Twelve Steps – 4th Step**

DATE: _____

<u>COURSE CONTENT</u>		
Information presented met the goals and objectives stated for this course	☐ Start Over ☐ Good ☐ Excellent	☐ Needs work ☐ Very Good
Information was relevant	☐ Start Over ☐ Good ☐ Excellent	☐ Needs work ☐ Very Good
Information was interesting	☐ Start Over ☐ Good ☐ Excellent	☐ Needs work ☐ Very Good
Information will be useful in my work	☐ Start Over ☐ Good ☐ Excellent	☐ Needs work ☐ Very Good
Format of course was clear	☐ Start Over ☐ Good ☐ Excellent	☐ Needs work ☐ Very Good
POST TEST		
Questions covered course materials	☐ Start Over ☐ Good ☐ Excellent	☐ Needs work ☐ Very Good
Questions were clear	☐ Start Over ☐ Good ☐ Excellent	☐ Needs work ☐ Very Good
Answer sheet was easy to use	☐ Start Over ☐ Good ☐ Excellent	☐ Needs work ☐ Very Good

COURSE MECHANICS		
Course materials were well organized	☐ Start Over ☐ Good ☐ Excellent	☐ Needs work ☐ Very Good
Materials were received in a timely manner	☐ Start Over ☐ Good ☐ Excellent	☐ Needs work ☐ Very Good
Cost of course was reasonable	☐ Start Over ☐ Good ☐ Excellent	☐ Needs work ☐ Very Good
OVERALL RATING		
I give this distance learning course an overall rating of:	☐ Start Over ☐ Good ☐ Excellent	☐ Needs work ☐ Very Good
FEEDBACK		
How did you hear about CEU Matrix?	☐ Web Search Engine ☐ Mailing ☐ Telephone Contact ☐ E-mail posting ☐ Other Linkage ☐ FMS Advertisement ☐ Other: _____	
What I liked BEST about this course:		
I would suggest the following IMPROVEMENTS:		
Please tell us how long it took you to complete the course, post-test and evaluation:	_____ minutes were spent on this course.	
Other COMMENTS:		