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WISDOM OF THE TWELVE STEPS - 5TH STEP

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About the Instructor:

David Walton Earle, LPC combines his counseling skills with his twenty-plus-years of executive management experience into a powerful matrix called Business Coaching. Using this technique, Earle assist leaders to increase their leadership effectiveness through people skills. He is also a teacher, trainer, author, counselor, and alternative dispute professional. 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 - 5TH STEP

Course Summary and Description

Part I – This story illustrates some of the principles and dynamics of this step. Learning is quicker and deeper when surrounded by a story. Hugging the Homeless seeks to provide that structure.

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

Part III – This part focuses entirely on the 5th Step using discussions, challenges, and provocative self-questions.

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**Wisdom
of the
Twelve Steps**

5th Step Workbook

Hugging the Homeless

David Walton Earle, LPC

Wisdom of the Twelve Steps – 5th Step

**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

Are all of these addictions related?

Could they all be the same thing with different faces?

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

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. Still, it will end in disaster if no other action follows. Understanding this concept, AA is not about alcohol. Still, as in all Twelve Steps, the focus is on a different way of thinking, resulting in the beginning of 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 gives structured fellowship and offers a set of coping skills far more effective than what you had before entering the program. 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.

All addictions are successful at separating the person from the pain, unsettling emotions, and deep hurts. All addictions are very effective! If not, what would be the attraction? They work extremely well, at least temporarily. This escape becomes a coping skill, a habit that hardens over time and usage. Their anxiety then becomes, how can I live without this coping skill? Although seldom expressed in words, deep inside the sufferer asks, “Who would I be without my addiction? How could I survive? I cannot stand to feel 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! Change is so difficult. It is why it takes a village to raise a child and a recovery tribe to achieve peace and serenity.

Those suffering from addiction, codependency, and compulsive behavior have found the Twelve Steps a wonderful guide toward serenity. This workbook, the *Wisdom of the Twelve Step* 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 Step* series of workbooks as your companion as you journey through your program – shortcutting any of these functions decreases the effectiveness of the change process.

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

This workbook 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, that this is a stormy and demanding ocean; you will need all hands on deck to successfully pilot these waters. Fortunately, many have already navigated these passages and know the way. Many eager sailors will help you adjust your sails, mend your broken spars, and show you the stars for your steering.

Are you a first-generation recovery? Were your parents in recovery? Did they teach you these principles? Probably not - your family is like many others and had these destructive coping skills for thousands upon thousands of years. Recovery is difficult – almost as if we are hard-wired. That is why the power of the group is so incredibly important to support you in the changes you are making.

You are the vanguard of change. You are the one who will change your family history and positively affect many people – some you know now, and many yet to be born.

You are not alone.

*“When we look back from the vantage point of sobriety,
many of us realize that when drinking we often felt
like a fake, a fraud, and a phony.
That’s because we were.”*

- Ray A., Practice

Previously published

What to Do While You Count to 10

Professor of Pain

Iron Mask

Red Roses 'n Pinstripes

Love is Not Enough

Outrun the Wolf

Simple Communication for Complicated People

Contents of a Small Boy's Pocket

The Joy of Dysfunctional Families – Joke Book

12-Step workbooks

Wisdom of the Twelve Steps – 1st Step

Wisdom of the Twelve Steps – 2nd Step

Wisdom of the Twelve Steps – 3rd Step

Wisdom of the Twelve Steps – 1st -3rd

Wisdom of the Twelve Steps – 4th Step

Wisdom of the Twelve Steps – 5th Step

Wisdom of the Twelve Steps – 6th Step

Wisdom of the Twelve Steps – 4th - 6th

Children's books

Mr. Buster -Wisdom of the Twelve Steps

Mr. Buster and the Red Ball of Anger

Co-authored

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

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Printed in the United States of America- September 2019 & 2024

ISBN: 9781717540744

***“It takes courage to grow up and
become who you really are.”***

— E. E. Cummings

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Part III – This part focuses entirely on the 5th Step using discussions, challenges, and provocative self-questions.

Part IV – Appendix

*“As long as it’s something you truly want to do,
then it’s never too late to take that first step.”*

— Kou Matsuzuki

Part I

Hugging the Homeless

She glared at me with hard eyes of doubt and hurt. Those eyes were used to experience abuse, dishonesty, and manipulation. Eyes well attuned to inflicting pain on others, and now these same piercing eyes were trying to stare a hole through me. Her eyes distrusted me; she wanted to attack but dared not.

“What the hell do you know, **Miss Prissy**, about abuse? What do you know about drug addiction with your perky smile, soft voice, and cheerful attitude? Are you, **Miss Bubbly**, trying to blow sunshine up my ass?” Her cheeks redden with contempt.

Although difficult, I held my emotions in check. Part of me wanted to reach over and slap that scowl off her face. I thought, *How dare you call me prissy. Miss Bubbly, does she think I am stupid?* That was my reactive self, it is like my **self-will-run-riot** tendency.

The other, wiser, and gentler side of me just laughed and remembered what it was like for me in early recovery. How arrogant I was. How desperately I pushed away what I wanted most. Despicable was another good word. *Yeah, I was despicable*, I chuckled.

“So you would like to know what right I have to talk to you,” I asked.

“Yeah, and don’t give me that bullshit about a college degree, I’ve had every type of educated counselor, and they are all bullshit! They know nothing. Nobody can understand what I’ve experienced ... **NOBODY**.”

I marveled at her contradiction. *She wants understanding*, I thought, *but she is pushing me away when I am trying to connect. Wow, she is so like me.*

“Bullshit!” I spoke slowly and with my best empathy to this small fierce woman in her mid-twenties with shaggy, self-cut bleached hair; a dirty grey hooded sweatshirt with the sleeves cut off; and faded blue jeans - her clothing fit her attitude.

She had started using drugs at around age 15. Since maturity tends to stop when drug usage begins, I knew I was dealing with an immaturity matching her belligerence. *Maybe I can love her back into society*, I thought *...or maybe I can't. God, this one is up to you*, turning this thought over gave me increased confidence but also made me chuckle.

“You are right,” I said, acknowledging her distrust, “I do not know where you came from or the painful route you took getting here. I’d love to hear your story, but maybe I should share my journey first.”

She looked at me with those intense eyes, challenging me to attempt to break through her well-entrenched and practiced denial system. I could see in her eyes what my eyes must have looked like in early recovery. Scary! However, I also knew a part of her was rooting for me, wanting me to reach her, but first, I had to prove my worth. A sudden fear struck me, *have I suffered enough? Can I understand her pain?* Her eyes asked me these same questions. I knew I had to answer correctly or risk losing our tenuous connection.

“Well when I was twelve, I was raped.” I looked into her painful eyes and immediately knew our histories connected. She slowly nodded, encouraging me to go on.

“He took my virginity and my innocence. Never would I be able to share myself with a soul mate for the first time.” I paused for the dramatic effect but mostly because I needed to collect my emotions as I felt the assault all over again. An electrical shock of shame went up and down my spine.

“Strange,” I told her, “I have told this story many times, yet I still feel this loss. Every time I tell my story, I take a little more power back from my past as healing brings more relief to my burning eyes.” I had not shared this for some time, and my reflection in her eyes told me I needed to ... more for my own sake than for hers.

We both looked at each other and shared an understanding look. “Ever since it happened, I punished myself. I was ashamed of myself. I dared not tell anyone because our family had an ironclad rule: we do not discuss unpleasant things. My family was very religious, stern, and rigid. I never doubted my mother loved me. She proved it many times in my screwed-up life, but she had to be perfect to the outside world, so rape did not fit her definition of perfection. As a little girl, I knew this, so I kept this secret with me for many years. I locked in this hurt deep down, and drugs kept the pain at bay.”

I cleared my throat and continued, “Looking back from a reference point of maturity, I can now understand the cost I paid for keeping my pain inside. I should have told someone, but I didn’t know what I needed at twelve. All I wanted to do was forget, and hiding decreased the rough edges of my pain. I now know my obsession with a life of its own.”

I paused, trying to collect my thoughts, remembering my attempts at trying to hide from my guilt and shame. It was like having to vomit but not allowing yourself. You purposely hold it back. You taste the bile inside your throat, knowing what you need to do is purge, but this would bring you out of denial, so you swallow your disgusting vomit. You dare not let it out.

“I wanted it to go away. I wanted to rid myself of the slimy shame I felt,” I again looked deeply into her wounded eyes, “I started using around fifteen and continued for many years. I was sober once - eight months in jail, plus one month afterward. Then I started using again.”

“You were in jail ... you?” she asked in amazement. “You don’t look like someone with a rap sheet.”

“I have more of a rap sheet than you know,” I smiled, thinking how distant that rap sheet seemed now. “Today my – that rap sheet does not define me nor does my drug usage. Nor does the harm I inflicted on others, especially the ones I loved. They have forgiven me, but I have yet to forgive myself. I am making progress, but self-forgiveness has proven to be a slow and painful process.”

“Forgiveness,” she echoed, slowly and deliberately, like touching the crown jewels with awe and reverence. “I like the sound of that word ... forgiveness.” Her voice was soft, almost childlike. The sharp edges from when we first started talking were beginning to fade. At this moment, she stopped pushing me away.

“Forgiveness has come slowly for me. My family’s forgiveness came quickly, especially when they saw my changes, but forgiving myself is like pulling teeth without Novocain!”

“You mean people forgave you for what you’ve done to them? I don’t think my family will ever forgive me. I would never forgive them if they did the same to me.”

Those penetrating eyes showed a longing look; I knew she’d desperately wanted forgiveness for a long time.

“What happened after your nine months of sobriety?”

“I guess I got cocky, or perhaps it was my denial, or maybe it was my arrogance but whatever it was, I thought now I could handle this; hell, I knew I could handle it. The truth was ... I was a slave to the stuff. I celebrated my nine months of sobriety with a nice crack rock. Just one, I knew I could handle one.”

“Did you immediately go down?” she asked, probably knowing the answer.

“One hit and then there were two, and I was right back into manipulating and stealing to get my fix. I became an expert at stealing appliances from Wal-Mart. My crack-induced brain figured out a way I could successfully steal VCRs, TVs, you name it. I was a thief but never was caught. I was living for the drug.”

She smiled, and if I guessed right, her addict brain was thinking about how she too could successfully steal from Walmart. “My supplier was also my abuser. I bought the drugs from him, and he would also beat me,” I stopped and looked into her eyes ... those expressive eyes, a gateway into her soul. “As sad as it was,” I reflected, “I felt so down on myself that it did not dawn on me to object to the abuse. See, I deserved it since I’d hurt so many other people; the abuse he inflicted on me was a form of absolution, a weird kind of repentance. He became my priest whose beating absolved me after I confessed. What I remember most amid the pain was thinking that ... **I deserved it!**”

We then shared a few moments of silence. She is thinking of her abuse and me remembering my pain and humiliation. “About this time, I had a job as a Head Start teacher,” a look of shock came over her face. “Yeah, imagine that. Me, a junkie as a Head Start teacher!”

We both laughed nervously, thinking what idiot would put a junkie in the classroom filled with young kids. “Since I had a key to the building, I stole the VCR and pawned it to buy drugs. It was then that my abuser wanted me to marry him. I only wanted him for the supply he could give me. Even with my crazy thinking, I knew I did not want to be married to him.”

“Your supplier ... your abuser wanted to marry you? How sick is that?”

I nodded in agreement, “Actually at that time, I could not see the insanity in his proposal. He threatened me when I refused his offer. If I would not marry him, he would turn me into Head Start for stealing the VCR.”

I paused here, remembering how diluted my thinking was, but even with my lack of objectivity, I knew marrying this man would worsen my life. “As I look back on his threat, and although I did not realize it then, this was my bottom – my rock bottom. My abuser, my drug supplier was the only person interested in marrying me. I knew then with a certain clarity that I had to change. I was so tired; I wanted to die. If something did not change, I would die and I knew it.”

“What did you do?” I now had her full riveted attention. I would later find out how much our stories paralleled each other’s. With this budding connection, the barriers she first put up were melting.

“I knew I had to get away from him, so I called my probation officer and told him what I had done; he, of course, was obligated to turn me over to the law. At my hearing, the judge thought he was doing me a favor. He gave me a choice of ‘...jail or outpatient treatment ... your choice.’ I surprised him when I chose jail. Going to prison was the only way I could escape my lifestyle. With outpatient treatment, I knew I could easily return to using. I knew my only chance for success was dry time, and jail was the only place I knew I could **spin dry** without him. I had been hitting bottom for so many years, my butt was sore. I knew I had to do something different. With the very little sanity I had left, I chose jail. The judge sentenced me to eight years and I ultimately did four. I signed over custody of my kids to my mother who, bless her heart, took the kids every weekend to visit me.”

“You served four years in jail? You did not have your children for four years?” The magnitude of the sentence hit her square in the face. “Four years,” her voice trailed off.

“Yes, four long but good years. It was in jail when I started working the Twelve Steps. I developed faith in the steps; here was something I intuitively knew would work. All I had to do was work the steps and avoid bad influences. My goal was to get to a place where I could help others instead of always being the one needing help.”

“Since you are here and want to help me, I guess your goal came true.” The realization of what I had accomplished suddenly became clear and gave her hope.

Until she acknowledged my goal, I had not considered my sharing with her as completing my ambition. A smile of pleasure came over my face, and I nodded my gratitude. “My first job after being released was as a fire watch on a construction job. Here many people offered me drugs and a **good time**. The more I said ‘no,’ the stronger I got. I then realized, that if I could say ‘no’ to drugs, I could say ‘no’ to a dysfunctional lifestyle and chaos. With that realization and my collection of ‘no’s,’ I could say ‘yes’ to a peaceful life.”

She laughed, “Just say ‘no.’ That easy, huh?”

We both grinned, “Yeah, just say ‘no.’ Now when I hear the cravings, I know it is my addict voice recalling all of those **good times**. This thinking is my trigger. This tempting voice is the voice of my addiction. When it speaks, I yell ‘**Shut Up!**’”

“Shut up? Does that work for you? Telling your urges just to ... **Shut Up**. I like that, thanks. That is what I will tell my urges ... oh just SHUT UP!” This street-hardened woman giggled with a schoolgirl’s delight.

“While I was working construction, my mom died, but I did not relapse. Normally, to hide from the pain I would have used, but I did not. I did not even want to. My saying "No" was a success. I had no desire. Instead, as my mother was dying, I sang to ease her pain. She told me she forgave me and told me to take care of my children and to stay in recovery. ‘Give sobriety a chance to work for you,’ she said. She died peacefully.”

I could see tears in her eyes as she shared in my loss. She later told me it was such a beautiful image, of me singing to my dying mother. She hoped that when her time came, someone would sing for her. “With Mom’s belief in me, I knew I could do this. I could again manage my life; I would not be a slave. I would not live for drugs anymore; I would now live for me. In recovery, I could live a normal life.”

I stopped here, sipped my iced tea, and realized it had a lemon. I like my tea very plain. I made a face at the taste of lemon but decided all I needed was a few swallows, especially now.

“I now have a six-year-old grandchild who has never seen me drunk, never seen me angry or so high on drugs I couldn’t get up. She sees me without my scars of imperfection. It is her acceptance - her steadfast belief in me - that helped me get back my self-love. I needed sobriety, and I needed that baby’s love. I now have self-love and my grandbaby’s love. I am happy. Instead of the depths of despair, the lonely deep dark well of existence, my sobriety has released me to love myself, and with self-love, I can love others,” I smiled to myself with the new freedom I now have, “I can love regardless of what is going on in my life.”

My tears were swelling in my eyes, gratitude for those who love me and gratitude for recovery, which allowed me to love them. This once rageful girl smiled, and with our tears, we connected again.

“I thank God for the steps. When I made amends about what I did, I had to get honest. I had to tell people - many of those whom I cared about - how I betrayed them. How I stole and manipulated them. While serving my four years, I even sent a letter to Wal-Mart, explaining how I stole the VCRs. My father took them back for me, and I was relieved I could begin to square my life with the people I’d harmed. I was grateful that the people at Wal-Mart chose not to press charges.”

She hung her head, studying her shoes. Softly, she said, “I have stolen from my parents.”

I smiled at her courage, to be honest. I knew with this honesty; she could work a program. Living a recovery program and working the steps requires telling the truth. Honesty is hard but necessary for progress.

“Making amends to my children was hard, and I still do it by telling them I love them even when they are making an ass of themselves. I will always love them; I may not like their behavior, but I will always love them.” It felt good thinking of the love I could now give; love without the weight of judgment I used to inflict upon those I loved.

“Because of working the steps, I can accept that the abuse I suffered does not define who I am, but before recovery, drugs protected me from realizing what a horrible person I was.”

She suddenly blurted out, “Oh, I have pity parties all the time ... I know how to do pity!”

We both chuckled remembering our pitiful-me parties “When you were in your pity party, did you feel like a victim?”

“Exactly! Look what **they** did to me. ‘Life was so unfair to me.’ Yes, being a victim is a good description.” I smiled, knowing how she would answer this next question before I asked it., Are you more or less likely to use when you feel like a victim?”

She surprised me by not answering immediately, “Well,” she thought, “When I feel sorry for myself and focus on what others did to me ... yes, drugs were a wonderful place to hide from the hurt. When stoned, no one could hurt me anymore – the drugs insulated me from further harm. I was numb.”

I smiled and continued, “I had many pity parties, thinking about the abusers in my life, what they did to me, and how I wished I could get even.” Just talking about it, I could still feel those long ago strong emotions of resentment and hate.

“I have even chosen to forgive the man who raped me. It took some time, but I forgave him. What I learned is that I cannot judge him by the hurt he did to me. Forgiveness is a freeing experience; I no longer have to carry this burden.”

A smile of amazement came over her face. Or maybe it was shock, “You **forgave** that bastard! Forgave him for raping you?”

I smiled, “Yes, I forgave even him. I also forgave my supplier for his physical attacks. I am glad I have not allowed the abuse to control my life. I forgave them to release myself from the burden of resentment and hate. I am so glad I did! Nobody now occupies the place of domi-

nance in my brain as they once did; in fact, I seldom think about the abusers or what happened to me.” As I was sharing with her, it dawned on me that, although I had worked the 5th Step before, in fact, several times sharing my shame with another, this step was not static, but an ongoing experience. Every time I shared my story, I was working the 5th Step again, and each time, I received benefits from my honesty.

She nodded her head in agreement. I could tell there was still much hurt, pain, and disappointment she was still clinging to, like a drowning man to a life raft. I hoped she would use my story as her touchstone for change, and if she did, this could begin her healing. I smiled at the thought of my story going with her.

“As hard as it was to forgive him, the hard part was forgiving myself.” I stopped and took a deep breath, knowing what to say next. “Forgiving myself from the memories of hearing my six-year-old little boy who wanted me to come out of the bathroom where I was so high I could not stand up. I can still hear his little voice in such pain and confusion.”

Although not as painful as they once were, all of these memories still hurt. However, whenever I tell my story, I get more forgiveness; my open wound of condemning myself is healing. Although I needed to continue to tell her my story, it was difficult to continue.

“I had to forgive myself for relying on my Mom to cook dinner for my kids instead of me. Drugs caused me not to function. It saddens me to know my drug usage took a lot of love and happiness from my children that I can never give back.”

She said, “Obviously, you are not the Miss Prissy I thought you were.” We both chuckled, and then she said, “I hope someday I can forgive myself, but it seems like such a long road; I don’t know if I could even begin.”

“I believe you can begin. Trust the recovery process.” I smiled at her, knowing the recovery road is long, bumpy, and crosses difficult terrain, but with the steps and her ability to become honest, I knew she could do it. “I had a habit of hurting others and myself. Inflicting pain felt normal. Pain was what I knew best. Not knowing anything else, I continued doing what I knew best and that was to inflict pain, so this chaos was a natural outcome of my thinking. Hurt people tend to hurt other people.”

I saw her wince before she asked, “I’ve inflicted a lot of pain on myself and others, especially my parents. They didn’t deserve what I gave them. Do you think they can ever forgive me?”

I thought about my mother's forgiveness and how freeing it was. "Even if your parents never forgive you, the steps will help you to make amends. Some will accept your apology, and some may not, but you will be better when you do, and I want you to focus on that... getting better."

She seemed more relaxed as I continued, "I was not there for my children. I cannot change history, but I can influence the future with a recovery program. I was not there to teach my kids what they needed to know. I regret that, but that opportunity has passed. What I can do now is be the beacon of light for them to navigate the future. When I was using, I thought I had all the time in the world. It was not until I started my prison sentence that I awoke to what I had missed and could never get back. Someone else had to teach my kids. Because of my behavior, I could not. Back then, I did not have a purpose ... I was emotionally homeless."

She stared at me with profound recognition, "Emotionally homeless, wow, that describes me to a tee. I have a roof over my head, but I feel so disconnected; I am emotionally homeless, too."

I do not recall who initiated it, maybe no one did and it just happened, but we both put our arms around each other and hugged very tightly. We felt the warmth of our warm embrace. In this hug, we both felt connected. Here, we were not homeless.

I smiled and said, "Admitting my wrongs to others was important. Admitting that I did not love myself was depressing. My honesty is where I started from but," I paused and smiled, "because of recovery, I am not there now."

She smiled with recognition as I continued, "I realize now there is nothing wrong with where I came from. I have to accept that I am a drug addict. Even though I am an addict, my Higher Power did not spit upon me when I was so **spit-able**."

We both hugged again. This is what recovery really is about ... *hugging the homeless*.

Part II

Before Beginning

The steps will create change. With each step, you will be a somewhat different person than before. You will see things differently—some parts of your life, your thoughts, and your levels of awareness will have changed. Working the steps helps change thinking, providing recovery principles to work with. People do not get to this step without a change—profound change. You already have proof since you have finished the first four steps of your recovery.

If you have already used another workbook in this series, you will find similarities to the material you already studied. This is general information vital to understanding this process. It is included since many have access to different steps. It is suggested you rework what you have done before as new learning will emerge.

As you complete each step, permit yourself 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 this workbook as your guide.

Note: In this workbook, the words “God” and “Higher Power” appear capitalized. Making this distinction 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

**“A mind stretched to a new idea never
returns to its original dimensions.”**
- Oliver Wendell Holmes

Steps 1, 2, and 3 – Encourage developing your relationship with a power greater than yourself that is much stronger than your addiction.

Steps 4, 5, and 6 – Discovering yourself returns you from the edge of extinction to the joy of life.

Steps 7, 8, and 9 – Improving relationships with others.

Steps 10, 11, and 12 – Learning the collective wisdom of the universe.

The 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 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 here, beginning the arduous task of learning how to live free through the 12 Steps. This workbook is designed to help you gain the power available from 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. You are working on this workbook because it represents something you want and know you 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 – and how you respond is your choice. Whatever you choose to write is your decision alone. Nobody will grade your answers, check your spelling, or criticize your cursive writing. Some may skip writing in this workbook and use a separate tablet. The results are what you are after, and how you paint your picture is personal.

Included in these covers are suggestions on how to work the step, and each workbook concludes with a series of specific thought-provoking questions. Your answers may provide an understanding often overlooked without this process. If your goal is to have a happier and more productive life, challenge yourself to join the fellowship of others struggling to find the answers to these difficult questions.

Suggestion: To benefit from your recovery process, attend 12-Steps meetings, find a sponsor, and share in the recovery fellowship. Allow these wonderful parts of the program to accelerate 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.

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 or 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 to examine **all** your thoughts ... learning what works for you and what does not. The program and this workbook help you start **thinking about your thinking**. The more you know your thinking, the more successful your decisions. Get input from those you respect, ask questions, share in the meetings ... be open-minded ..., and **challenge yourself**. **Thinking about your thinking** makes for much better decision-making ability.

After this section, there is a specific series of questions 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 on another step. Join the many people who have used the 12-Steps for positive change over the years.

**“The pessimist complains about the wind;
the optimist expects it to change;
the realist adjusts the sails.”**
- William Arthur Ward

Promise

Congratulations! You have completed the first four steps. Looking back, most people agree that desperation drove them to begin, and a connection with a Higher Power inspired them to complete this difficult task. Desperate 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 during horrific stories – you saw smiles and laughter, and you heard of positive change, your hope began to blossom into belief. Again, congratulations, many start this process but 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 is 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 have accomplished much. 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 that 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. Your own best friend. Sound good? Many people confess at this stage in their recovery they have barely begun to tolerate themselves. It improves, for self-love is now available for those who choose it. Love is a decision. Your challenge is to learn to love yourself. These steps will become increasingly challenging, but your continuing success will hearten you.

In the winter, the trees lose their leaves, and although you know spring will bring forth new growth, the tree looks dead. Many do not realize that the roots grow stronger for the coming spring in the winter when the leaves are gone, and the trees look dormant. Because of your addiction, co-dependency, 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.

Promise:

To chase away the darkness, stay sober, and find serenity. *Serenity is a key promise*, and it echoes from 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 are now rewarded for their hard work, live in the light, and are happy they chose to continue. Follow their lead, and you **will** be successful.

- Continue your study of the Twelve Steps.
- Use this book or another like it as your guide.
- Work with your sponsor.
- Be honest.
- Share what you learn with others.

Remember: you are the tip of the change arrow, poised on the edge of discovery. You stand at a crossroads. What you do now 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 also the lives of those you love - now and for generations to come.

Before Beginning

Since some tend to have better days than others, give yourself a range – for example - 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?
- ✓ Would you go to almost any lengths to achieve your goals?
- ✓ What is the cost to achieve your goal?

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

- ✓ What is keeping you from breaking out of your current status quo?

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

**“...people change,
but the past doesn't.”**
- Becca Fitzpatrick

“

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

Exercise 1

“Begin with the end in mind.”

7 Habits of Highly Effective People
Steven Covey

Write about what would happen if you begin working on the 5th Step with the end in mind, the outcome you desire.

Note- When answering any question in this book, permit yourself to be creative, sometimes just one word works best, sometimes it takes a picture, and often several paragraphs are necessary

Big Book – Promises

**“...light trumps darkness, every time.
You stick a candle into the dark, but you
can't stick the dark into the light.”**
- Jodi Picoult

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 that used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.”

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One of the simplest, yet profound, promises is the name of Chapter Two of the Big Book, **There is a solution**. People coming out of the cold of addiction find comfort in 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*.

5th Step Doubts

Do you have any of these doubts?

- You doubt you could admit your character defects to another person.
- You doubt God would ever care about your wrongs.
- You doubt your sponsor would accept you after you bared your soul.
- You doubt you dare to be honest about the loved ones you have hurt.
- You doubt anyone would want to receive your list.
- You doubt this painful experience will do any good.
- You doubt you will receive the freedom promised by your honesty.

The unhealthy side of doubts is allowing them to control you. Can you continue with this step if some of your doubts when prove very strong? Will you allow your doubts and fears to keep you from achieving your goal?

The healthy side of doubt is realizing that the chasm is ten feet wide, and your best leap is only eight. Here 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 was accurate and kept you from a tragic mistake.

– Your emotions are your God-given guide. These are the same emotions when in your addiction that you tried so hard not to feel, so you hide, medicate, and run from. Anything not to feel. Instead, work on managing them by not allowing your emotions to control your life. Acknowledge and manage your emotions. You will find them all on the Mood Chart.

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

False **E**vidence **A**ppearing **R**eal

Specifically, what are *your* doubts about the 5th Step? List them here.

Note: Recovery allows the full expression of all emotions, especially joy. To celebrate the freeing effects of happiness, this book includes several **smile** statements to lighten your burden. Although not designed to split your sides with uproarious laughter, these jokes show us 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...
you never learned the difference between
the tingle you feel with someone you like
and when common sense leaves your body.*

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, and accept what you intuitively know to be true, and this change can be yours. Once you realize the power is within you this provides ability. Trust the process.

Exercise 4

Do you have the ability to change?

Do you already have the necessary tools for change such as a sponsor, Twelve Step meetings, safe friends, reading self-help and AA literature, etc.?

When you stray into stinking thinking, do you have others willing, and able to be honest with you?

Do you have the encouragement of supportive friends who will listen and be your cheerleaders with an occasional pat on the back?

What do you need but are currently missing to be successful? How can you develop what you need?

Change is hard.

Change

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”

- Mother Teresa

The desire for something better has a wonderful ally, motivating humans toward change. **Pain.** Many Twelve-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 history, reminding themselves of how miserable their lives once were, compared to where they are today. They get to recall the suffering, the misery, the pain. As unpleasant as it often is, this memory becomes the touchstone for progress. Pain often fuels the desire necessary to succeed. Think about allowing the pain ... your pain ... to become your ally. The very same pain you previously let control you! Is it a strange concept, to embrace something that you used to medicate? Can you accept 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 do not choose to enjoy the entire Twelve-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...
when drunk, you look for warehouses.
When sober you realize just
what a poor speller you are.

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?” The path of least resistance happens when your addict voice speaks, and you listen. The addictive part of you is so cunning, powerful, and baffling, it can talk you into anything.

Several common thoughts occur to almost everyone attending Twelve-Step meetings. “**I can do this my way**” is the first one on this stinking thinking list, and “**I don’t belong here- or I’m not as bad as them.**” These powerful recovery-blocking thoughts keep people away or permit them to leave. When these thoughts threaten your recovery, look for identification in the fel-

lowship, not differences, and you will find what you are looking for. Recognize thoughts like these are your addiction talking

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 out loud, your addict voice ceases to have the power it once had over you. **Correction:** - the power you *gave* it to control you.

**“It takes guts and humility to admit mistakes.
Admitting we're wrong is courage, not weakness.”**
Roy T. Bennet

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

Discovering yourself will bring you back from the edge of extinction to the joy of life.

4th Step – Honesty

The 4th Step requires all of your strength and desire, together with a 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, that 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 slogan is very true, and we begin to become real with this step. We begin to heal.

5th Willingness

With the 4th Step, you start 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 this dreaded closet. In this step, 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 control the door. You can close it

anytime you feel overwhelmed. This shame, your long-dreaded humiliations, you hold in your trembling hands. With a great deal of courage and bravery you may not think you have, you allow the pain of the past to be your ally. When you expose the contents of your disgrace to another trusted soul, your open hand and expose your shame to the light. You may fear this step and with good reason. The exercise unmasks 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's radiance to what was once so dark and obtain the healing effects on what you once thought so dominant.

Using the shame closet as your 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 putting shame into its proper place. It opens the door to your willingness to face up to your wrongs. Your self-forgiveness will not be yours until you complete this difficult task. In this step, you begin to understand yourself and look forward to the possibility of forgiveness. You begin to feel lighter as you share the darkest unfathomable depth of your soul. From your shoulders, many years of encrusted self-loathing, blame, and shame begin 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 could not afford to buy happiness
so instead - you bought a timeshare.

6th Change

The 6th Step is about letting go. You achieve freedom by putting all your character defects into their proper perspective and then turning them over to a power greater than yourself! 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 awaits your confessions by sharing your transgressions and being willing to turn them over.

Sex Addicts Anonymous has a healing motto that fits with these three steps:

From shame to grace.

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...
you salivate over past grievances
anticipating the thrill of the
approaching nasty confrontation.

Exercise 6

You defined your desire to change, your willingness, and what abilities you have to accomplish your goals. Now put it in a larger 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 put down your current meaning and allow the concept to filter through your consciousness. This question seems strange, but its answer is important to your recovery journey. Permit yourself 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. What meaning can you obtain from your suffering?

“It takes strength and courage to admit the truth.”

- Rick Riordan

“

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...
the battered women's shelter
is on your speed dial.

Exercise 8

Can you express your emotions (Mood Chart page 51) Do you express your feelings with these words in your significant relationships? With your sponsor? Most people do not. Observe in your next meeting, how many people use feeling words. Remember in your addiction you used to hide from emotions. Still, 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 can now manage and use what you formerly denied and were terrified of experiencing. When you think of expressing your emotions, what do you feel? List them here.

You might need recovery when...
you divorce your spouse just
to get him to show some emotion.

Exercise 9

Before recovery, you probably used one or more of these addictions and/or compulsions: alcohol, drugs, food, sex, work, the lives of other people, etc. Remember, addiction is an ...*external solution for an internal problem*. Describe what you have used before (and maybe still use) ... as your 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 such as: attending 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 on the steps?

Where does your program need improvement as of this moment? Specifically, what keeps you from working the program *worthy of your recovery*?

Exercise 11

More importantly, think about the unmanageability of your life. Is it something worth returning to? Probably not, so before you again allow “self-will to run riot,” know you need structure to see you through your goals. Allow yourself the discipline you need to be successful. What do you have, if you do not have recovery,? Probably not much. Before recovery, how was your life running? Doubtless, very chaotic. Your future requires 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.

“Be brave to live from your heart.”

- Roy T. Bennett

“

The steps involve time, energy, commitment, desire, and willingness. Are you ready to put this into your change process? Begin with the end in mind. Declare to yourself:

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

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 in your handwriting and paste your goals on your bathroom mirror. As you look into the mirror, tell yourself these statements every morning and every evening. By doing this, you are reprogramming your sub-

conscious mind by telling yourself what you want to believe. It does not matter what you believe now, keep on saying them until they come true. Trust the process.

Word of Warning

**“It is not true that everyone is special.
It is true that everyone was once special
and still possesses the ability to recover it.”**

— Criss Jami

Others close to you may like the changes they see in you, but since you have hurt many or all of them, they may not trust any positive change you make. You may be surprised to see doubt on their face, 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 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 accomplishing. 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 old AA members say, *my program is the most important thing in my life*. Having this laser focus 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.

**“Owning our story can be hard but
not nearly as difficult as spending
our lives running from it.”**

- Brené Brown

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 simultaneously a wonderful, fulfilling, empowering, and joyful experience. You will not regret your time making changes to your lifetime. “

“Today is the first day of the rest of your life.”

Is this true for you? For many years, you felt disconnected from yourself. The disconnected feeling 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. Decide to become an internal millionaire. In this desirable state, no one can take away your wealth or steal it, the IRS cannot tax it, and the people you love will receive your loving 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 you recover. If you do not have your recovery, you have nothing ... your future requires you to get back; put your program first and await the results.

“Do you know who is the most miserable person? It is someone who knows there is a better life but chooses it not”

Jimmy C.

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 form of simple discipline that 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 thousands of other recovery people have already discovered. These gifts are available to achieve the recovery you ardently desire, passionately seek, and most sincerely deserve.

Those 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 the doubt on their face, 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 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 old-time A.A. 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 family, work, and even God.

**"Owning our story can be hard but
not nearly as difficult as spending
our lives running from it."
- Brené Brown**

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: Alcoholics Anonymous has not sanctioned this workbook; the author is responsible for its contents. There are as many ways to work the steps as there are sponsors. This workbook seeks to provide the recovering community with another method.

Part III

Understanding the 5th Step

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

Are you ready to let go? Are you prepared to let go of the terrible burden of self-loathing and gain peace? Are you ready to forgive yourself?

In the 4th Step, you listed your shortcomings and strengths. Consider some of your poor coping skills were strengths you overused. It is painful to develop a clear and accurate picture, but now, in the 5th Step, you are ready to use that painful inventory and share this burden to admit your transgressions with another. Instead of “coming clean,” think instead of now owning up to the truth, what you so long denied, hid from, numbed, and chose not to acknowledge. You now have the opportunity to become honest in this Step, maybe for the first time.

This Step begins the process of rewiring yourself. Your family - like all other families - has habits of behavior, a level of chaos known to them. Some families have more chaos than others. For thousands of years, your family has been developing the norms that generations have received and passed down. This level of dysfunction is your inheritance. Entering recovery, you realize some of these patterns – these chaotic habits - are too painful to continue, so instead, you choose the Twelve Steps to aid in your changing. In the 5th Step, you can remove the masks your family taught you to hide behind and instead expose the truth to the sunlight for healing. Your Higher Power and another trusted human being will see the real you, not distorted by false images or pretensions but as you are.

Be careful when you consider the person to share this intimacy. It has to be someone who will listen to you, focus on understanding what you are telling them, and, most of all, have a deep commitment toward acceptance. If your sponsor has these qualities, this person is the logical choice. You certainly do not want anyone judgmental or critical - if so, find another. You must have trust to experience the intimacy demanded by the 5th Step.

After writing your list of character defects, gather the courage to meet with your sponsor. You may dread the anticipation of the meeting and, understandably, have many fears. Will he understand? Will she judge me? Will he find me as despicable as I feel? Will she reject me when

I am so worthy of absolute rejection? Can I ever dare to break our family's unwritten norms about not being honest or talking about deep personal secrets? Can I get honest, trust another, and express my true feelings?

In this intimate setting, you are very vulnerable. You are exposing yourself to possible judgment, condemnation, and rejection—three things that you would have run away from before recovery. Never before would you dare expose yourself to this degree of honesty. In recovery, you begin to trust and begin to live differently. You begin to see progress toward an unimagined but hoped-for distant dream—maybe you, too, can live in serenity.

What is toxic shame? It is a deep, false belief that somehow you are not okay. You are a mistake, totally depraved, and condemned to darkness by a terrible God. Much of your shame comes from adverse childhood experiences, which then are exacerbated by what you'd done as an adult. No mother or father ever raised a child perfectly, and you've taken this imperfection into adulthood as a painful wound. Many of these wounds are deep, dark, and shame-inducing. As an adult, who now owns your childhood shame? Regardless of who caused your wounds - or who was not there for you when you needed them most - inflicted pain or made you suffer, even if the important people in your life caused all your agony, it is now all yours. You have to deal with it. Despite your wounds, you are responsible for how you live your life.

**“Only when we are brave enough to
explore the darkness will we discover
the infinite power of our light.”
- Brené Brown**

You learned about your shame closet in the 4th Step. This deep, dark, and secret place where you store everything you never want to see the light of day. In the darkness, your shame strengthens and metastasizes into something more potent and sinister. It takes considerable energy to contain your shame. It is a shame you must not reveal to others. So you hid behind the mask of arrogance. You have to keep it concealed. You would die if it ever escaped – right? One of your coping skills is to deny its existence, and only on the darkest nights, when the sickening reality escapes, do you regretfully acknowledge its existence, and then you shudder with your shame's reality. This truth was previously too powerful to admit, so your addiction kept it at bay,

requiring you to spend considerable psychic energy keeping the door to your shame closet tightly secured. As you know, it did not always work, and that reality was depressing.

In the 5th Step, you will open this door, take out some shame, then close the door. With your sponsor and your Higher Power, you hold the shame in your hand, exposing it to sunlight for healing. Once exposed to the light of day and in this environment, shame immediately begins to lose its power over you. When this handful of shame has lost significant power to dictate your level of serenity, you can again open the door, extract another portion of shame, and repeat the process. This way, you will empty your closet of shame. You are doing this at your own pace, upon your command, and at your will. You are in control.

When finally sharing your transgressions, the contents of your shame closet, with your sponsor and your Higher Power, most people feel a wonderful feeling of freedom, relief, and joy. You will feel lighter and unburdened and have an increased positive outlook on the power of recovery. A glowing realization begins: You can have a happy life.

Before you begin the 5th Step, close your eyes and be silent in the presence of the creative force – your higher power, a God of your understanding, knowing the outcome is not in your hands. Here is a simple but powerful exercise you can do before sharing. In your mind's eye, picture yourself in the hands of your Higher Power. Is this a good place to be?

In these loving hands, you are safe to expose your true self. Knowing you are in these good hands helps remove the fear of getting honest with another. This silence provides the comfort necessary for the flow of shame to begin. With your heart-filled acknowledgment in the presence of another, the shadow of your shame flows out of you through your sponsor. Finally, it dissipates as your Higher Power transforms it into understanding and acceptance. Tell the terrible tales of your transgressions, what you did to others, your family, and your significant other. Be honest about what you did to cause pain to others and yourself. Think about what your behavior costs in terms of lost relationships, rejection, pain on another's face, humiliation, and shame. Acknowledge the terrible price you paid for your behavior.

Your sponsor will listen quietly and respectfully, nodding their head with understanding. After unburdening your wounded soul to another person and the God of your understanding, you may experience tears of relief. Instead of receiving the wrath of judgment you feared, you begin to receive beautiful and long-sought absolution through the wonders of acceptance.

When completing your tale of woe, you may hear this loving question, “Is that all you did?” If you receive this monumental question, it may echo in your guilt-racked brain, for this simple question will help you put your world into proper perspective. Yes, you did things you regret and wish to undo, but you cannot. Yes, you caused pain to your loved ones that you can never take away. In this accepting environment, this question is freeing, for it allows you to begin to accept yourself **even with all your faults**.

Hearing this question with caring and understanding may provide other opportunities to reveal yet more hidden, shameful experiences that still need to be brought into the daylight. You now see yourself with the fresh eyes of forgiveness, not distorted by your self-loathing or overburdened by guilt. Now, someone else knows. Now, you heard your own transgressions in your own voice. Now, they no longer hide in the darkness of your shame closet. When your honesty decreases your shame, there is a corresponding increase in the capacity to trust and love.

Working the 5th Step, you offer your list of transgressions to your Higher Power, hoping for forgiveness. Don’t be surprised if your Higher Power gives you back your list of all your failings, transgressions, and humiliations and lovingly whispers in acknowledgment, “I love you even with your list.”

The forgiveness you sought in the past, which has been so elusive, is now possible with your honesty. After this exercise, you will know that self-forgiveness is possible. It is not a question of “if.” Forgiveness is yours, but the more accurate question is, how much forgiveness are you willing to accept?

A 5th Step Prayer

Forgiveness Prayer

God, teach me to forgive
take away the hurt, the anger,
the loss ... the profound sense of loss.

These feelings
which encapsulate my heart,
restricting it from growth.

This is a load too heavy for me to carry ...
a hurt too long not healed ...
a barrier to loving again.

Place Your healing hands upon my wounded soul.

Allow me to look into Your loving eyes.

Let me see myself in Your reflection ...

the mirror of objectivity,
not distorted by self-doubt,
self-hate, imperfection,
or failure.

Let me know ...

I am loved ...

I do have worth!

Allow me to know ...

I can ...

forgive me.

You have already forgiven me ...

I know ... who am I ...

who am I to do less?

Exercise 12

Who have you selected to hear your 5th Step? Is this someone who will listen to you, focus on understanding what you are saying, and is deeply committed to acceptance? What is their history of working the Twelve Steps? Is this person a good role model?

Exercise 13

Think about your shame closet. What are your thoughts about sharing your most personal intimacy with another person? Go to the Mood Chart and list your feelings concerning the degree of honesty required to complete your inventory. Right now, you have many emotions. Paint a rainbow of your feelings from the Mood Chart. Whatever you see and feel on this chart, know those are your feelings and all are okay. You do not have to run from your emotions ever again; they are here to guide you. Make emotions your ally, not your enemy. List your feelings about sharing your darkest secrets with another person.

Exercise 14

At the beginning of this exercise, list the most powerful feelings you expressed in Exercise 13 and write them in the column labeled **Feelings** in Exercise 15 on page 47. See the example below.

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

Thinking About Your Thinking

When you rely solely upon your emotions—or, to put it another way, when you allow your emotions to be in control, in that state, you are drunk with emotions. Remember a time when you were drunk or high? Did you make good decisions? (Author’s note, I know the answer to that question.)

Any action without the benefit of thought has a high probability of harm. Not being aware of the thoughts driving your feelings causes your emotions to be out of control. When emotional chaos is in the driver’s seat, one becomes *emotionally drunk*.

What causes emotions? The answer to this question will be on the test (sic)! **Thoughts create emotions**. Emotions are like a car’s dashboard warning signal. Their flashing light are warnings that something needs to be checked. Ignoring this message can cause harm to your car. Emotions flash on your life’s dashboard and send messages. Thoughts are behind the emotional messages.

To discover what thought is dictating your behavior, emotions first have to be recognized and acknowledged. Once identified, then the thought creating the emotion can be understood. Now once the thought is identified, you are in a very powerful place! Here thinking about thinking is possible.

Identifying the thought causing the emotion exposes it to exploration:

- ✓ Is it true or false, or do you need more information?
- ✓ Is it healthy thinking or stinking thinking?
- ✓ Will it build or destroy?
- ✓ How much happiness do I want to give up because of this situation?

Perform this diagnosis on your thoughts you are now *thinking about your thinking*. You are now in charge, not your emotions. Not your thoughts. With this objective point of view, the truth becomes clearer, and better decisions result. Successful lives are more likely for people who *think about their thinking*.

You might need recovery when...
after you get out of a bad roller coaster
relationship - you bought another ticket.

When you allow your emotions to control you, do you know what you have done? You've raised your hand, waving it madly, begging, volunteering to be a victim. "*Choose me! Choose me*, you frantically beg life, *Let me be the victim!* Sadly, most people live as victims, missing out on much happiness when giving their power away.

My Life Will Change ... When I Change!

What happens when you think about your thinking? You are **living your life on purpose**. Once you identify your thoughts, you are in your rational brain. What will work better for you: purposefully living your life or volunteering to be a victim?

Exercise 16

Write about a time when you were emotionally drunk and hurt a loved one. Thinking about your thinking is a powerful way of separating stinking thinking from recovery thoughts.

How would you have behaved if you were **not** emotionally drunk but instead were instead thinking about your thinking?

Exercise 17

What do you need to let go of certain toxic relationships, places, habits, behaviors, coping skills, and attitudes? What will it cost you to do so? Are you willing to pay the price of letting those things go? What will be your reward?

Exercise 18

Are you ready to release this heavy burden by letting go of your shame closet? Are you prepared to give up self-loathing to gain peace? Here is a difficult question you probably never considered: **Who would you be without your shame?** (You will deal with this more in Step 6.)

Exercise 19

Are you ready to forgive yourself? Describe your thoughts about forgiving yourself.

Exercise 20

What would self-forgiveness look like? How would you act when you finally clean out your shame closet? Draw a picture, write a poem, or express some symbol of forgiveness.

**“It’s hard to see red flags if you are
wearing rose-colored glasses.”**
BoJack Hoseman

Exercise 21

How much energy do you expend trying to keep others from knowing the contents of your shame closet? How do you hide? Where are you not true, not authentic, not genuine? What will it take for you to become REAL? What will it cost? Are you willing to pay?

Exercise 22

Are you willing to picture yourself in the hands of your higher power? Is this a good place to be? Do you feel safe to be completely honest in these loving hands?

Exercise 23

What would it be like to have your Higher Power, God, or god-creator love you? Love you, even with your list of character defects?

Exercise 24

How much forgiveness are *you willing to accept*?

Strange Thought

The 5th Step requires openness and then sharing that honesty with another. The reward for honesty is acceptance. Instead of the world’s judgment, support. This process allows sufferers to bring their shame into the sunlight, and it is only in the light that healing can begin.

The following poem is about Adolph Hitler doing his 5th Step. To understand, pretend you are the “other person” hearing Hitler’s 5th Step. Even after many generations, Hitler’s cruelty rings so incredibly loud as to drown out any thoughts of his humanity. Maybe this world is not ready to understand this monster.

It is hard to consider this evil man as the same species (human) as us is a quantum leap of understanding. Is the world ready to see behind this man’s mask into his humanity? Is it safer not to feel any connection to this monster at all? This poem sought to look beyond his despicable deeds and used this extreme example to profile the healing power of the 5th Step.

In recovery, we step out of our own self-importance and begin seeing the world differently. This change allows us to consider a much larger question. What is our responsibility towards children yet to mature? In recovery, we can now contribute to the village necessary to raise a child.

Hitler's Fifth Step

A once-angry man was now subdued and calm,
facing his higher power through me.
His voice- rapid, rose with increasing intensity.
The world unites, condemning this man,
the most famous villain of all time.

Yet, as he shared his soul before me
scared, defenseless, and vulnerable,
he became a real human being
who just wanted to be loved.

His rage was his protective mask
hiding a hurt child within his soul.
The pain he inflicted ... so massive – so destructive.
this man's crazy sick cry - love me ...
a scared little boy.

As he confessed his tale of crimes and hate,
mass graves of skin and bones
how he tortured thousands and thousands
and then laughed as their children died.
My stomach turned with disgust:
tales of suffering, hurt, and pain
occasioned by this man sitting before me.
His pain was real ... profound and severe –
true remorse and shame.

As he shared these sins before me,
arrogance stripped from his soul,
and thundered at my feet.
No one can change history,
his legacy of suffering and shame.
But what if someone had touched his soul,
held him in their arms, and loved him?
Are there many little Adolphs
Just wanting to be hugged?

For on this day, before my eyes
from beneath this world's worst monster
came a beautiful child of God
who wanted to be loved.

Part IV

Emotions

What is the definition of **cool**? It means not to show emotions, or express deep feelings. Cool does not allow the full expression of your emotions, creating a high degree of dishonesty. When you drank, took drugs, and controlled others, you successfully were protected from your emotions, even numb. You were, by this definition, cool – **Olympic-caliber cool!** When in an altered state, wholly divorced from emotions, you achieve the ultimate **cool**.

How did being cool work for you?

In her book **Positivity**, Dr. Barbara Fredrickson describes emotions as 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. With no keel, the sailor could not follow the plotted course and only head 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. Will you continue to enable the chaotic winds to blow you all over the ocean, or will you 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 “negative” emotions are for **warning**, and “positive” emotions are the **healing** feelings.

Blessing

On your journey through life,
may the **healing** emotions fill your sails
and the **warning** feelings protect you.

Where do your feelings come from? Where do your emotions originate? Your feelings and your emotions come from how you think. Think differently, and you will feel differently.

The Twelve-Step program helps you think differently, and as your thoughts change from selfishness to openness, your feelings will change.

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

Draw a picture of your recovery when you began and a different one as you experience it now.

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	Fluster	Humiliated
Hostile	Fervour	Grieving	Frightened	Insulted
Indignant	Flush	Helpless	Horrified	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...
 your perfect man comes
 with a warning label.

About the Author

David Walton 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.

Earle has been on the panel as a mediator and arbitrator for organizations such as the U.S. Federal Court-Middle District, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Financial Industry Regulatory 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 Will Change...When I Change*TM. He enjoys tennis and lives in Baton Rouge with his dog, Maggie, and his wife, Penny.

Suggested Reading

“Believe you can, and you're halfway there.”

- Theodore Roosevelt

7 Habits of Highly Effective People - Stephen R. Covey

Adult Children for Alcoholics (ACA) – Tony A.

Anger - Thich Nhat Hanh

Another Chance - Sharon -Cruse

Beyond the Relaxation Response - Hebert Benson. M.D.

Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous - Bill Wilson

Calling All Women - Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse

Codependency No More - Melody Beattie

Daily Reflections for Highly Effective People - Stephen R. Covey

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 Seven Spiritual Laws of Success - Deepak Chopra

The Way of the Wizard - Deepak Chopra

Understanding Co-Dependency - Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse

Circumplex Model for Marriage & Families – Dr. David Oleson

Wake UP! - Tom Owen-Towle

“Books may well be the only true magic.”

Alice Hoffman

Special Dedication

Sam Sublet was a man in his 30s who became very close to my wife and me. We even emotionally adopted him as our grandchild and treated him as if he were ours. He was a brilliant writer and did considerable preliminary writing on *The Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* series.

He was raised in a rigorous religious family but rejected their beliefs. He had great parents and siblings (a lot of siblings). Sam had a great heart and loved others very passionately. Lorrian (Rainie), his firstborn, had a severe and terminal congenital disability. I have a picture of him in the NICU unit with his hand on the incubator reading Harry Potter to his 6-week-old baby girl. Rainie died shortly afterward.

Because of a physical ailment, Sam began using oxycodone for pain and then became addicted to opioids. Although he sometimes went to my fellowship, the “god-thing” kept him from embracing recovery. One Saturday morning, we met for breakfast at the Waffle House, where we had a deep discussion concerning higher power.

In frustration, I told Sam, “You say you do not have a higher power. But you do!”

I knew he had a higher power – his addiction. He worshiped a god who did not love him and wanted him dead. He had a large heart and desperately wanted to love and be loved. During our last conversation, we talked about his not believing in God.

Incensed with my lack of acceptance that threatened his ridged beliefs, he glared at me. He knew he had no higher power! Shocked, he became angry. He stood up and was about to walk out when I said, “Sam, your higher power is your addiction.”

“You constantly think about it, donate to its existence, and genuflect before its altar. It is more important than your wife, Rainie, or unborn baby. You worship its power and will do its bidding!”

He sat back down, confronted by this reality. He hung his head and agreed. He knew it was true.

Although I knew this hurt my friend. I loved him enough to tell the truth.

“Sam,” I gently said, “I’d like to give you a higher power that is more powerful than your addiction.”

His kind face looked at me in bewilderment since he trusted me, so I had his attention. “You have a tremendous ability to love. You love life. You love your wife. You love Rainie. You love your unborn baby.

For a long moment, we shared this wonderful truth. He smiled. Sam was all about love.

“Why not choose love as your higher power?’ It is something you know very well. You know it's true. It is deep within you. You can feel it, and you know when it is not there. Can't love be your higher power?

He gave me a big smile that lit up that restaurant. “You know, Poppy, I think you are right.”

He died of an overdose the following weekend. I miss Sam. But maybe his mission on earth was to give me something I was missing. Although I suggested this awareness, it was I who needed this realization. Love is now my higher power.

Thank you, Sam.

PS – Because of Sam, I now carry NARCAN (Naltrexone is a medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat both Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and Alcohol Use Disorders). (AUD) It is an opioid antagonist that has already saved many addicted people. If I save one person from death, then it puts great meaning in my loss of my dear friend. With the ever-increasing death rate due to overdoses, caring NARCAN is something to consider.

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 - please pass it on. You can contact me at earlecompany@cox.net.

Happy Recovery!

Appendix A: Wisdom of the Twelve Steps: 5th 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.

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 using the answer sheet 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 'Take Exam' 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, which is the final step in the process. Once you submit the evaluation, you will 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.

Part I - *Hugging the Homeless*

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Learning Objectives

Upon completing this section, participants will be able to:

- Understand why sufferers often develop quick bonds with those who have similar affliction
- Recognize prevalent attitudes of addictive people
- See the power of denial in addictive people
- Explain how addiction often is more powerful than parental bonds
- Take advantage of the healing power of honesty

Note: When the question relates to the speaker, this person is referenced as "she," and the other young person is called the "adolescent."

1. She was in early recovery.
 - a) True
 - b) False
2. The adolescent could not believe anyone could understand her and *pushed away anyone trying to connect*.
 - a) True
 - b) False
3. Addiction has little or no effect on maturity.
 - a) True
 - b) False
4. The adolescent challenged anyone's attempt to break through her well-entrenched and practiced denial system.
 - a) True
 - b) False
5. Telling her story brings back a little more_____ every time she tells it. (best answer)
 - a) power
 - b) life
 - c) happiness
 - d) contempt

6. When she was raped, she punished herself and was ashamed. She dared not tell anyone because her family had an ironclad no-talk rule. The man who raped the woman took her virginity and her _____.
- a) innocence
 - b) trust
 - c) future
 - d) drugs
7. All she wanted to do was forget the misery, hiding decreased the rough edges of her pain. The abuse became an obsession with a life of its own.
- a) True
 - b) False
8. She had a history of just some minor brushes with the law.
- a) True
 - b) False
9. Forgiving herself was like pulling teeth, and now even in recovery, she allows her rap sheet and drug usage to define her.
- a) True
 - b) False
10. She went to jail for stealing appliances from Walmart.
- a) True
 - b) False
11. She believed since she hurt so many other people, any abuse inflicted on her was a form of absolution, a weird kind of penitence.
- a) True
 - b) False
12. Her addict voice recalling all of those *good times* was her _____.
- a) conscience
 - b) friend
 - c) trigger
 - d) penitence
13. The judge gave her a choice: jail or outpatient treatment. She knew outpatient treatment was the only way she could escape her lifestyle.
- a) True
 - b) False

14. When she made amends, she had to get honest. She had to tell people - many of those whom she cared about - how she betrayed them, -stole from them, and manipulated them.

- a) True
- b) False

15. The woman smiled at the adolescent encouraging her to be honest. She knew the adolescent could work a program with her honesty. Working the steps requires telling the truth. Honesty is hard but necessary for progress.

- a) True
- b) False

16. When the adolescent was in her pity party, she felt like a victim, but this did not increase the likelihood of her using.

- a) True
- b) False

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17. Forgiveness is a _____ experience..." She knew that she no longer had to carry this burden.

- a) freeing
- b) extricating
- c) miserable
- d) terrible

18. Once the 5th Step is finally worked and _____ another, repeating her experience becomes a static condition. Forgiving herself was easy compared to forgiving her abuser.

- a) her shame is shared with
- b) when she is forgiven by
- c) when she completes all 12 steps
- d) when her ship comes in

19. You are not _____

- a) Welcome
- b) Happy
- c) Successful
- d) Alone

20. Trust the recovery _____.

- a) system
- b) books
- c) counselors
- d) process

21. Hurt people tend to _____ other people.
a) betray
b) disappoint
c) hurt
d) insult
22. The words "God" and "Higher Power" appear capitalized in this workbook. Capitalization or not capitalization some people find this _____ as it brings to mind certain definitions found in religion.
a) restrictive
b) helpful
c) hurtful
d) necessary
23. When she did not have a _____, she was emotionally homeless.
a) family
b) recovery
c) purpose
d) memory
24. People will always forgive you for hurting them if you are honest.
a) True
b) False

Part II - Before Beginning

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this section, participants will be able to:

- Understand the resistance to a personal Higher Power
- Use the power of thinking about your thinking
- See how to allow natural wisdom to appear
- Appreciate the motivating effects of pain
- Become aware of how a person's addict voice affects recovery

25. 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 your awareness will change. Working the steps helps change thinking, providing recovery principles to work with."

- a) thinking
b) attitude
c) drug of choice

26. By answer~~ing~~ing the same questions again – the reader will often experience growth between answers. This comparison allows for new insights and often provides additional understanding.

- a) True
- b) False

27. When the reader sees the word "God" or "Higher Power" in capital letters, some find comfort in substituting the word "god" or "higher power" without the traditional capitalization.

- a) True
- b) False

28. Your journey now asks for something many think is insurmountable.

- a) Beginning again
- b) Forgiveness
- c) Quitting
- d) Change

Understanding the Wisdom of the Twelve Steps

29. Steps 1, 2, and 3 – Encourage developing a personal relationship with a power greater than yourself that is much stronger than _____.

- a) addiction
- b) religion
- c) myths
- d) other's ~~th~~thoughts

30. The *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 _____. They seem simple and straightforward - and they are - but translating this simple wisdom in our complicated brains takes time, understanding, and the guidance of others."

- a) the ages
- b) recovery
- c) change
- d) consistency

31. You gain the maximum benefits from your recovery process, when you attend Twelve-Step meetings, find/talk to your sponsor, and share in the recovery fellowship. These wonderful parts of the program are the _____ for your change process. Without the energy and motivation offered by the recovering community, this workbook will sit on a shelf collecting dust... a sad reminder of the happiness you chose to give away to your addiction."

- a) guide
- b) touchstone
- c) catalyst
- d) purpose

32. What was the habit of Steven Covey's book, suggested in this workbook?

- a) Be Proactive. Take responsibility for your life.
- b) Begin with the End in Mind.
- c) Define your mission and goals in life.
- d) Put First Things First. ...
- e) Think Win-Win. ...
- f) Seek First to Understand, Then To Be Understood. ...

33. Get input from respectful people, ask questions, share in the meetings... be open-minded... *challenge yourself*. Thinking about your thinking makes for much better decision-making ability."

- a) True
- b) False

Promise

34. Many enter recovery with only...

- a) hope
- b) a sponsor
- c) knowledge
- d) a court ordered

35. Recovery people are the tip of the change arrow, poised on the edge of discontentment.

- a) True
- b) False

36. People entering recovery stand at a crossroads that will not only affect them for the rest of their lives but send ripples of change through the universe, affecting the lives of their loved ones, now and for generations to come.

- a) True
- b) False

37. One of the simplest, yet most profound, promises is the name of Chapter Two of the Big Book, _____ Once you realize the power is within you this provides the ability. Trust the process.

- a) There is a solution
- b) To the wives
- c) Stop drinking and start living
- d) As Bill sees it.

Habits

38. The workbook suggests readers answer 1 of Steven Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People:

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

39. *The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous* states: "If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half-way through. We are going to know a _____.

- a) new beginning and a new happiness
- b) less misery and more happiness
- c) increased awareness and a better life
- d) new freedom and a new happiness

40. John Bradshaw describes co-dependency as "... a condition wherein one has no inner life."

- a) True
- b) False

41. The more a person works the Twelve Steps, the closer the promises become true.

- a) True
- b) False

42. Discovering _____ will bring you back from the edge of extinction to the joy of life. (All are true, answer from the book.)

- a) yourself
- b) recovery
- c) the fellowship
- d) a solution

43. In completing any step, there isn't any real success when a person declares to himself, their sponsor, and a trusted friend their determination to complete this step.

- a) True
- b) False

44. According to the *Wisdom of the Twelve Steps*, a person must have three components to make any change:

- a) desire, willingness, ability
- b) willingness, sponsor, desire
- c) painful reminders, willingness, ability
- d) desire, joy, others helping

45. When emotional chaos is in the driver's seat, one becomes

- a) emotionally drunk
- b) Out of control
- c) unable to love
- d) difficult to be in a relationship with

46. The newcomer helps the fellowship recall their suffering, pain, and misery. This unpleasant memory becomes the touchstone for progress. Pain often fuels the desire necessary to succeed." Allowing pain to become an ally is a recovery myth.

- a) True
- b) False

4th Step – Honesty

47. People tend to hide their shame in the dark recesses of their _____ where it metastasizes, grows larger, and more powerful. So powerful, it controls their lives and dictates their misery. You gave your power away to this dark energy."

- a) subconscious
- b) memory
- c) past
- d) shame closet

5th Step – Willingness

48. With the 5th Step, the recovery person opens the door of the dreaded closet, takes a handful of slimy shame, closes the closet door, and then, exposes this shame to the light of day.

- a) True
- b) False

49. You achieve freedom by putting all of your character defects into their proper perspective and then turning them over to a power greater than yourself. Just letting them go is _____." (best answer).

- a) freedom
- b) joy
- c) happiness
- d) difficult

50. A person's success is greatly dependent on a support system.

- a) True
- b) False

51. Before the 12 Steps, recovery people used one or more of these addictions and compulsions: alcohol, drugs, food, sex, work, the lives of other people, etc. In the *Wisdom of the Twelve Steps*, addiction is defined as an "...external solution for an _____ problem."

- a) previous
- b) internal
- c) unsolved
- d) undiscovered

52. You may be surprised to see doubt on their face, 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 - _____ - to believe in you again."

- a) in their own time
- b) to develop acceptance
- c) get their own sponsor
- d) work their own program

53. For many years, you felt disconnected from yourself. This is a painful awareness you tried to medicate with your addiction. Reconnecting with you is the cornerstone of a happy life. The greater the _____, the more you can connect with others."

- a) self-connection
- b) understanding
- c) program
- d) world experience

54. Recovery people know structure will help them control their tendency to allow "self-will to run riot."

- a) True
- b) False

55. Successful recovery is to manage what formerly was denied and was so terrifying to experience.

- a) True
- b) False

56. 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 and the slogans are some forms of simple discipline a person's wounded soul needs to hear. The Big Book and other self-help literature 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 then await the results.

- a) True
- b) False

Part III - Understanding the 5th Step

5th Step - Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this section, participants will be able to:

- Obtain freedom when being honest about transgressions
- Recognize the power of toxic shame
- Comprehend how an accepting environment produces change
- Understand the difficulty of self-forgiveness
- Appreciate the victim mentality
- Practice a method of managing emotions

57. Entering recovery, people realize some patterns of chaotic habits that are too painful to continue. So instead, they chose the Twelve Steps.

- a) True
- b) False

58. In the 5th Step, you are ready to use that painful inventory and share this burden, your transgressions with another. Instead of "coming clean" think instead of now of _____ truth, what you so long denied, hid from, numbed, and/or chose not to acknowledge. You now have the opportunity in this step to become honest, maybe for the first time."

- a) denying
- b) owning Up
- c) sharing
- d) believing

59. In recovery, you need a great deal of consideration when choosing the person to share the 5th Step.

- a) True
- b) False

60. During recovery, people worry about their ability to get honest, to trust another, and to express their true feelings.

- a) True
- b) False

61. Toxic shame is a deep false belief that somehow you are not okay, a mistake, totally depraved, and condemned to darkness by a terrible God."

- a) True
- b) False

62. Much shame is from childhood exacerbated by what you have done or not done as an adult.

- a) True
- b) False

63. When a person reaches adulthood, who is responsible for the effects of childhood shame?

- a) Parents
- b) The adult

64. Brené Brown said, "Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our darkness." It takes considerable energy to contain shame because it -must be concealed from everyone.

- a) True
- b) False

65. After completion of the 5th Step, instead of receiving the wrath of judgment feared, the recovery person begins to receive beautiful and long sought _____ through the wonders of acceptance.

- a) reward
- b) punishment
- c) absolution
- d) praise

66. When finishing the 5th Step, you may hear this loving question.

- a) Do you feel worse?
- b) Do you expect me to believe that?
- c) How honest were you?
- d) Is that all you did?

67. In this accepting environment, the addictive person can begin to accept themselves only when *faults have been forgiven*.

- a) True
- b) False

68. Even when shame is exposed to the light of day, it still holds power over the sufferer.

- a) True
- b) False

69. Before beginning the 5th Step, know the outcome is not in your hands.

- a) True
- b) False

70. Working the 5th Step, admitting the list of transgressions with the hope of forgiveness is a feeling of being loved *even with your list*.

- c) True
- d) False

71. The 5th Step prayer acknowledges forgiveness but challenges the reader to forgive themselves.

- a) True
- b) False

72. Most people who live their lives as _____ missing out on much happiness when giving their power away. A good slogan to have is *My Life Will Change... When I Change!*

- a) patsies
- b) degenerates
- c) do-gooders
- d) angels
- e) victims

73. The *Wisdom of the Twelve Steps* challenges the reader to answer the question: *How much forgiveness are you willing to _____?*

- a) believe
- b) trust
- c) accept
- d) reject

Part IV - Appendix

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this section, participants will be able to:

- Understand the relationship between emotions and addictions

74. *Cool* means “to not show emotions, not express deep feelings, and without the honesty afforded by full expression of emotions, creates a high degree of dishonesty.” By this definition, drug addicts/alcoholics are *Olympic-caliber cool!*

- a) uncool
- b) nerd
- c) dishonesty
- d) rejection

75. A person’s emotions come from _____.

- a) how they think
- b) how they feel
- c) past understanding
- d) unmet expectations

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.

Then, if mailing or faxing your test results, return this form along with your answer sheet for processing. **If you submit your evaluation online, you do not need to return this form.**

NAME: _____

COURSE TITLE: _____

DATE: _____

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

COURSE MECHANICS		
Course materials were well organized	<input type="checkbox"/> Start Over <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs work <input type="checkbox"/> Very Good
Materials were received in a timely manner	<input type="checkbox"/> Start Over <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs work <input type="checkbox"/> Very Good
Cost of course was reasonable	<input type="checkbox"/> Start Over <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs work <input type="checkbox"/> Very Good
OVERALL RATING		
I give this distance learning course an overall rating of:	<input type="checkbox"/> Start Over <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs work <input type="checkbox"/> Very Good
FEEDBACK		
How did you hear about CEU Matrix?	<input type="checkbox"/> Web Search Engine <input type="checkbox"/> Mailing <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Contact <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail posting <input type="checkbox"/> Other Linkage <input type="checkbox"/> FMS Advertisement <input type="checkbox"/> 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:		