

Came to Believe

Al-Anon Deep Dive · The Recovery Files

"...that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

A Dual-Lens Recovery Intensive — The Recovery Files

The Three Movements of Step Two · Came · A gradual process — not sudden conversion · To Believe · Willingness before certainty · Restored · Sanity is possible — for you · " · Al-Anon Step Two · Alcoholics Anonymous Step Two

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

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Each reading is followed by its check-in questions and exercises, in the same order as the app. Your scored results are shown in the app.

PART 1 OF 6 · READING

The Words of the Step: "Came to Believe"

AI-Anon Step Two — The Recovery Files

"Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." Three phrases, each carrying its own profound invitation. Together, they form one of the most quietly radical sentences in recovery literature.

Begin with the remarkable phrase "Came to believe." Not "believed immediately." Not "decided to believe." Not "forced yourself to believe" or "pretended to believe until it felt real." Came to believe — a gentle, gradual, organic process. The language itself is gentle on purpose. The founders of twelve-step recovery were describing what they had observed in themselves and in others: that belief, real belief, the kind that actually changes how you live, tends to arrive gradually, through accumulation, through evidence, through willingness and experience rather than through intellectual decision or emotional coercion.

"A Power greater than ourselves." This phrase does not require you to believe in any specific deity, to affiliate with any religion, or to accept any creed. What it does require is an honest acknowledgment that your own unaided resources — your intelligence, your willpower, your strategies, your love, your effort — have not been sufficient to solve this problem. Something greater than yourself is needed. What that something is, you get to define in terms that are honest and workable for you.

"Could restore us to sanity." In Step Two, sanity does not mean the absence of mental illness or emotional pain. It means the restoration of sound, grounded, reality-based thinking and decision-making. It is the opposite of the repeating, self-defeating patterns that addiction creates — in the person using and in those who love them. Sanity is the capacity to look clearly at a situation and respond in a way that serves your genuine wellbeing. To stop doing what experience has shown doesn't work.

Reflection Questions

1. Which of the three phrases — 'came to believe,' 'a Power greater than ourselves,' or 'restore us to sanity' — creates the most resistance or interest for you? Why?

2. What does the phrase 'came to believe' suggest about the pace and nature of spiritual development? How does that challenge or comfort you?

3. How do you currently understand 'a Power greater than yourself'? Is that understanding working for you, or does it need revision?

4. What would 'sanity' look like in your specific situation — not an abstract concept, but a concrete, daily reality?

5. Write your own version of Step Two in plain language, in terms that are honest and meaningful for you right now.

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 1 OF 5

Current Beliefs About a Higher Power

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. I believe in something greater than myself that can influence or guide my life

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. My concept of a Higher Power has changed or evolved since I began recovery

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I can hold belief or openness to belief even while doubting or questioning

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I separate my concept of a Higher Power from negative religious experiences in my past

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I am willing to define my Higher Power in my own terms rather than someone else's

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I believe that the group, the program, or a set of principles could serve as a Higher Power for now

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I have experienced moments where something beyond my own willpower seemed to carry me through

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. I am open to the possibility of belief even if I do not yet have certainty

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

YOUR EXERCISE

My Spiritual History

Worksheet 6 of 10

Where You've Been

Your relationship with spirituality has a history — shaped by family, culture, experience, loss, and discovery. Understanding that history helps you see why Step Two presents the specific challenges it does for you, and what genuine spiritual development has already occurred in your life.

Early Spiritual Formation

1. What was the spiritual or religious environment of your childhood? What were you taught, explicitly and implicitly, about God, prayer, faith, and higher powers?

2. What were your early experiences of the sacred, the transcendent, or the deeply meaningful? Where did you encounter something that felt larger than ordinary life?

3. What wounds or disappointments in early spiritual or religious experience have you carried into adulthood?

4. Who were the spiritual models in your life — positive or negative — and how have they shaped your current relationship with belief?

Spiritual Life Now

1. Describe your current spiritual life — not what you think it should be, but what it actually is. What practices, beliefs, or experiences constitute your spirituality today?

2. What has addiction done to your spiritual life? Has it deepened it (through crisis), damaged it (through disconnection), or complicated it (through both)?

3. Where do you currently experience genuine connection — to something larger, something meaningful, something that feels like grace or guidance?

4. What would you like your spiritual life to look and feel like in recovery? What specifically would you want to cultivate?

PART 2 OF 6 · READING

What Is Insanity? Recognizing the Patterns

Al-Anon Step Two — The Recovery Files

There is a phrase often heard in recovery circles: "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results." In Step Two, insanity is not a clinical diagnosis. It is an honest, compassionate acknowledgment of a specific set of patterns — patterns of thought, belief, and behavior that have been repeated despite clear evidence that they do not work.

The distortions of addictive thinking are well-documented. Minimization: the problem is not as bad as it looks. Rationalization: there are good reasons for the behavior. Denial: the problem doesn't really exist. Magical thinking: things will somehow get better without any fundamental change. The geographic cure: if I move, change jobs, change relationships, the problem will be solved. All-or-nothing thinking: either I control this perfectly, or I might as well not try at all.

For the person in recovery from substance use, recognizing insanity means becoming willing to see their own thought patterns with honesty. Not the isolated bad decision, but the systematic pattern of self-deception and self-defeat.

For the loved one in Al-Anon, recognizing insanity means looking at the pattern of your own responses to addiction and asking: have these responses ever actually changed the situation? The answer, for most people in Al-Anon, is no. The controlling, the monitoring, the enabling, the emotional management of someone else's using: these behaviors feel rational and loving from the inside. But measured against their actual results — not their intentions, but their results — they follow the same pattern as the addiction itself: repetition without change, effort without effect.

Recognizing your insanity is not an occasion for shame. It is the pivot point. It is the moment when honesty becomes available and real change becomes possible.

Reflection Questions

1. Describe two or three specific patterns in your own life that fit the definition of 'insanity' — repeating behaviors or beliefs despite evidence they weren't working.

2. What stories has addiction told you — about yourself, about the person you love, about the situation — that were not based in reality?

3. What has it cost you to maintain the insanity — the repeating patterns — rather than acknowledging them and seeking something different?

4. Looking back, when did you first begin to suspect that your approach wasn't working? What stopped you from acting on that suspicion?

5. What would 'sanity' look like as a daily practice in your specific life — not as an abstract ideal, but as a concrete way of thinking and responding?

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 2 OF 5

Recognizing Insanity in My Patterns

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. I have repeated the same behaviors — expecting different results — even when experience showed me they wouldn't work

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I have made decisions in active addiction (or in managing someone else's addiction) that I later recognized as irrational

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I have told myself stories about my situation that I knew, on some level, were not true

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I have normalized chaos, crisis, or dysfunction as 'just how things are' rather than recognizing the pattern

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I can identify specific moments when my thinking or decision-making was distorted by addiction or its effects

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I understand that 'insanity' in Step Two doesn't mean mental illness — it means repeating patterns that don't work

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I have begun to see the specific ways my own thinking has worked against my recovery and wellbeing

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. I can acknowledge the irrational patterns in my life without shame — as information, not condemnation

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

YOUR EXERCISE

My Insanity Inventory

Worksheet 1 of 10

Purpose

This is not an exercise in self-condemnation. It is an inventory — a clear-eyed look at the specific patterns of thought and behavior that have repeated despite evidence they don't work. Naming them honestly is the first step toward releasing them.

AI-Anon Lens

Insanity as the loved one: the patterns of controlling, enabling, and managing that repeated without producing change.

Personal Recovery Lens

Insanity as the person in recovery: the patterns of using, promising, relapsing, and rationalizing that repeated despite consequences.

Identifying My Repeating Patterns

1. List three to five specific behaviors or decisions you have repeated — in active addiction or in managing someone else's — despite clear evidence they were not producing the results you wanted.

2. For each pattern: how many times did you repeat it? What did you tell yourself would be different this time?

3. What is the underlying belief that has kept each pattern in place? (e.g., 'If I love them enough, they'll stop.' / 'I can control this if I try harder.')

4. Which pattern has been the most costly — and the most persistent? Why do you think it has been hardest to release?

The Stories I've Told Myself

1. What stories has your mind told you about your situation that turned out not to be true?

2. How did these stories protect you from having to face the reality of Step One — the powerlessness and unmanageability?

3. What story are you most tempted to tell yourself right now, in this season of recovery? What is the honest truth that story is protecting you from?

4. Complete this sentence honestly: "The most persistent piece of insanity in my thinking has been believing that _____."

PART 3 OF 6 · READING

A Power Greater Than Ourselves: Building Your Own Understanding

AI-Anon Step Two — The Recovery Files

No aspect of twelve-step recovery is more misunderstood than the concept of a Higher Power. People have walked out of meetings, refused to work the Steps, dismissed decades of accumulated recovery wisdom — because they heard "Higher Power" and assumed it meant something they couldn't accept. This is a loss, and it is unnecessary.

Step Two does not require you to believe in anyone else's God. It requires only that you be honest about the limits of your own power, and open to the possibility that something beyond your unaided ego might help where your unaided ego has failed.

Here are some of the ways people in recovery have understood their Higher Power in workable terms. Some have used the group itself: the collective wisdom and experience of people who have been through addiction and found their way through. Some have used the principles of the program: honesty, humility, love, service. Some have used nature: the vast, ordered universe that existed before human suffering and will exist after it. Some have used love itself. Any of these is enough to begin.

The key is this: you do not have to have it figured out to take Step Two. You do not need a clear, coherent, theologically consistent concept of a Higher Power. You need only willingness — the willingness to hold the question open, to act as if something greater than yourself is available, and to pay attention to what happens when you do.

Reflection Questions

1. What is your current honest understanding of a 'Power greater than yourself'? Describe it in your own words, without using language you don't actually mean.

2. What barriers — religious wounds, intellectual resistance, pride, past disappointment — make this concept difficult for you? Be specific.

3. Which of the workable understandings of Higher Power described in this reading resonates most: the group, the principles, nature, love, something else? Why?

4. Describe a moment in your life — in recovery or before it — when you experienced something that felt like guidance, support, or grace from beyond yourself. What happened?

5. What would it take for you to be willing — even tentatively — to act as if a Power greater than yourself is available to you? What small step would that look like?

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 3 OF 5

Barriers to Belief & Openness

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. I carry wounds from organized religion that make the concept of a Higher Power painful or triggering

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I believe that my logical or scientific worldview is incompatible with spirituality or belief in a Higher Power

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I have felt abandoned, punished, or ignored by God and it has affected my willingness to believe

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. My pride or self-sufficiency makes it difficult to acknowledge that I need help from anything beyond myself

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I am afraid that believing in a Higher Power means accepting beliefs I disagree with

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I feel that I have done too much, or that too much has been done to me, to deserve spiritual restoration

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I confuse 'came to believe' (gradual) with 'believe immediately and completely' (all-or-nothing)
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
8. I am aware of at least one significant barrier to my openness to Step Two — and I am willing to examine it
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

YOUR EXERCISE

Defining My Higher Power

Worksheet 2 of 10

Your Own Understanding

There is no right answer here. The only wrong answer is the one that isn't honest. This worksheet helps you build — or begin to build — an understanding of a Higher Power that is genuine, workable, and yours.

Where I Am Right Now

1. How would you describe your current understanding of — or relationship with — a Higher Power? Be completely honest, including any doubt, resistance, or uncertainty.

2. On a scale of 1-10, how willing are you right now to open to the idea of a Power greater than yourself? What would move that number even one point higher?

3. What does 'greater than myself' mean to you? Not theologically — personally. What in your experience has felt truly larger than your own ego or willpower?

4. What do you need your Higher Power to be — or to not be — to be workable for you right now?

My Working Definition

1. Based on your exploration, write a working definition of your Higher Power — in your own words, as honestly as you can. This is not permanent. It can and should evolve.

Build your working definition...

2. What specific actions will you take this week that reflect a decision to place trust in this Higher Power rather than relying solely on your own thinking?

Build your working definition...

3. Complete this: "I came to believe — or I am beginning to believe, or I am willing to believe — that _____ could restore me to sanity in the following ways: _____."

Build your working definition...

YOUR EXERCISE

Barriers to Belief Worksheet

Worksheet 3 of 10

Why Barriers Matter

Every person carries specific, personal barriers to belief — wounds, arguments, habits of mind that make openness to a Higher Power difficult. Naming them is not giving up. It is the beginning of addressing them.

Religious Wounds

Experiences in organized religion that created shame, fear, or deep disappointment.

1. What specific religious experiences have created wounds that now affect your relationship with the concept of God or Higher Power?

2. How have you carried those wounds into recovery? In what ways have they led you to reject the spiritual dimension of the program?

3. Is it possible to separate those wounds from the concept of a workable Higher Power? What would that separation require?

Intellectual Resistance

The belief that a scientific or rational worldview is incompatible with spiritual belief.

1. What intellectual arguments do you use most often to dismiss the concept of a Higher Power?

2. Has your intellect — your best thinking — solved the problem of addiction in your life? What does that tell you?

3. Is there a version of 'a Power greater than yourself' that is compatible with your intellectual framework? What might that look like?

Pride & Self-Sufficiency

The belief that needing outside help represents weakness or failure.

1. In what ways has pride or self-sufficiency prevented you from reaching out — to a program, to a therapist, to a Higher Power?

2. Where did you learn that needing help was weakness? How has that belief served and harmed you?

3. What would it mean to redefine strength as the courage to accept help rather than the ability to manage alone?

PART 4 OF 6 · READING

Step Two from Both Sides: The Dual Recovery Lens

Al-Anon Step Two — The Recovery Files

Step Two meets both the person in personal recovery from addiction and the loved one affected by another's addiction at a crucial juncture: the moment when their own best efforts have been acknowledged as insufficient (Step One) and something new must be found to fill the gap.

For the person in recovery from substance use, the insanity of Step Two is primarily the distorted thinking of addiction itself. The belief that this time will be different. The convincing inner voice that argues for just one more drink, one more hit, one more time. Recognizing this insanity — really seeing it, not just acknowledging it intellectually — is one of the most disorienting and ultimately liberating experiences of early recovery.

For the loved one in Al-Anon, the insanity recognized in Step Two is different but equally real. It is the insanity of believing that love alone can cure a disease. The insanity of sacrificing your own health, sanity, finances, and relationships in service of someone who is not yet ready to receive your help. This is not foolishness. It is what love looks like when it has not yet learned that it cannot fix what it did not cause.

The restoration promised in Step Two looks somewhat different through each lens, though it flows from the same source. For the person in personal recovery, restoration to sanity means decisions made from values rather than cravings. For the loved one, restoration means the return of a self that had been lost in the management of someone else's addiction — the recovery of one's own emotions, desires, and life.

Reflection Questions

1. Which lens do you relate to most in Step Two — the personal recovery lens or the Al-Anon lens? Do you relate to both?

2. What specifically has been the insanity in your story? Not general patterns, but the specific, repeated behaviors and beliefs that fit this description.

3. What does 'restoration to sanity' look like for you personally — what would you gain back? What would a saner version of your life look like?

4. How has your experience on both sides of addiction given you a unique capacity for compassion or insight?

5. What would it mean to trust something beyond your own thinking in this season of your recovery? What would that require you to release?

YOUR EXERCISE

Both Sides: Dual Recovery Reflection

Worksheet 4 of 10

The Two Paths to the Same Door

Whether you arrive at Step Two through your own recovery from addiction or through recovery from the effects of someone else's addiction — or both — you arrive at the same threshold: the recognition that something greater than yourself is needed.

Step Two Through the Personal Recovery Lens

1. What specific insanity — repeating patterns of using, rationalizing, and expecting different results — are you recognizing in your own story?

2. What form has your 'best thinking' taken? The thinking that said: I can manage this, I don't need help, one more try will be different?

3. What does 'restoration to sanity' mean for your personal recovery — in your relationship with substances, with yourself, with others?

4. What version of a Higher Power is most workable for you in your personal recovery right now?

Step Two Through the AI-Anon Lens

1. What specific insanity — the repeating patterns of controlling, enabling, and expecting the person who is addicted to change because of your efforts — are you recognizing?

2. What has been the cost of relying on your own strategies to fix another person's addiction? What has that reliance cost you personally?

3. What does 'restoration to sanity' mean for you as a loved one of someone with addiction — in your own emotional life, your own choices, your own peace?

4. How might surrendering the management of another's addiction to a Power greater than yourself actually be an act of deeper love than continued control?

PART 5 OF 6 · READING

Spirituality Without Religion: Making Step Two Your Own

AI-Anon Step Two — The Recovery Files

One of the most important distinctions in recovery is the distinction between spirituality and religion. Religion is an organized system of beliefs, practices, and community built around a particular theological tradition. Spirituality is something both broader and more personal: it is the experience of connection — to something larger than oneself, to meaning and purpose, to other human beings, to whatever one understands as sacred or transcendent.

This distinction matters enormously in recovery because so many people arrive carrying significant wounds from organized religion. For these people, the language of God and prayer that appears in recovery literature can feel like an obstacle rather than an invitation. Step Two is not asking you to go back to something that hurt you. It is asking you to build something new — something that is genuinely yours, genuinely honest, and genuinely useful.

What are the building blocks of a personal spirituality? Begin with the experience of being part of something larger than yourself. This is available to everyone, regardless of theological belief. It exists in nature, in community, in music and art and literature, in service. It exists in the practice of honesty itself. There is a spiritual dimension to telling the truth — even a truth that is difficult. Honesty opens something up. It creates a quality of presence and connection that dishonesty closes off.

You don't need to have it all figured out. You need only to keep the door open.

Reflection Questions

1. What is the difference, in your own experience, between religion and spirituality? Have you experienced both? What has each offered you?

2. What spiritual practices — understood broadly — are already part of your life? (Consider: nature, music, community, service, honesty, meditation, creativity, prayer, movement.)

3. What wounds from organized religion or religious experience are you carrying into this work? How might you address them without closing the door to spirituality entirely?

4. Describe a recent experience of genuine connection — to a person, a place, an idea, a moment — that felt, however briefly, like something larger than yourself.

5. Design a personal spiritual practice that is honest, workable, and genuinely yours. What would you include? What would you call it? How would you practice it?

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 4 OF 5

Building a Spiritual Foundation

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. I have identified — or am working to identify — a concept of a Higher Power that is meaningful and workable for me

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I have practices in my life (prayer, meditation, nature, music, community, service) that connect me to something larger

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I am actively developing my spiritual life rather than waiting for belief to arrive fully formed

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I use the collective wisdom of my recovery community as a source of guidance and power

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I can distinguish between religiosity (following rules) and spirituality (connection to meaning)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I have shared my Step Two work — my doubts, my beliefs, my emerging understanding — with another person

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I apply Step Two daily: when I notice my thinking becoming irrational, I return to the question of what could restore me to sanity

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. I trust — even cautiously — that recovery is possible for me, not just for others

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

YOUR EXERCISE

Building My Spiritual Practice

Worksheet 9 of 10

Practice, Not Performance

Coming to believe is not something you think your way into. It grows out of small, repeated practices that put you in contact with something larger than your own worry and will. The practice does not have to be religious, and it does not have to be long. It has to be real, and it has to be yours.

AI-Anon Lens

A practice that helps me let go of what I cannot control in someone else's life.

Personal Recovery Lens

A practice that keeps me connected and teachable in my own recovery.

A Menu of Practices

For each, write whether you have tried it, what happened, and whether you are curious to try it now.

Prayer — spoken, written, or silent

Meditation or quiet breathing

Daily reading (program literature, scripture, a meditation book)

Time in nature

Gratitude list

Meetings and fellowship

Service to others

Journaling

Music, art, or creative expression

Designing My Daily Practice

1. Morning (5 minutes or less): what will I do to begin the day connected, and exactly when and where?

2. During the day: what brief pause will I use when fear, resentment, or the urge to control rises? (A breath, a slogan, a short prayer, stepping outside.)

3. Evening: how will I close the day? (A short review — where did I let go today, where did I grab on, what am I grateful for?)

4. When I am in crisis or cannot focus, what is the smallest version of my practice that still counts?

What Gets in the Way

1. What has gotten in the way of a spiritual practice before — time, doubt, old religious wounds, feeling like a fraud?

Be honest about the obstacles...

2. If the word God does not work for you, what language does? What do you actually connect with?

Be honest about the obstacles...

3. Who could you practice with, or report to, so you are not doing this alone?

Be honest about the obstacles...

My First Seven Days

A line a day: did I practice, what did I do, and what did I notice? Missed days count as information, not failure.

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

Day 6

Day 7

1. After seven days: what helped, what did not, and what will I keep?

What the week taught me...

PART 6 OF 6 · READING

The Promise of Restoration: What Recovery Makes Possible

AI-Anon Step Two — The Recovery Files

The word "restore" implies that something has been lost — that there was a before. And for most people in recovery, there was. Restoration does not mean returning to that before as if the intervening years could simply be erased. It means the recovery of capacities and qualities that have been damaged or buried by addiction, and the building of something new and more resilient on that foundation.

What does restoration to sanity actually look like in practice? It looks like the ability to make decisions without being hijacked by craving, fear, or the desperate need to manage someone else's behavior. It looks like the capacity to sit with discomfort without needing to escape it immediately. It looks like telling the truth even when a lie would be easier. It looks like asking for help without shame.

Restoration also means the recovery of relationships. Addiction has a way of warping every relationship it touches. Trust erodes. Intimacy becomes performance. Communication becomes strategic rather than honest. Restoration to sanity means the slow, effortful, enormously worthwhile work of rebuilding — first with yourself, and then with the people who matter most to you.

Father Martin, whose Chalk Talk has introduced more people to recovery than perhaps any other single piece of education, pointed out that alcoholism — and by extension, the family disease that surrounds it — is not a problem of the body alone. It is a problem of the whole person: body, mind, and spirit. Step Two is the beginning of the spiritual dimension of treatment. Restoration is not an event — it is a direction. Every honest meeting attended, every moment of genuine connection, every small act of trust in something beyond your own ego: these are the building blocks of restoration. They accumulate. They compound.

Reflection Questions

1. What has been lost — in yourself, in your relationships, in your capacity for joy and presence — that you most want to have restored?

2. What does restoration to sanity look like in concrete, daily terms for you? Name three specific things that would be true if you were living in restored sanity.

3. What is one area of your life where you have already experienced some degree of restoration — even partial, even incomplete? How did it happen?

4. What do you need to release — what belief, behavior, or control pattern — to allow restoration to continue?

5. Write a letter to the version of yourself you hope to become through working this Step. Describe what they are like, how they live, what they have recovered.

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 5 OF 5

Openness to Restoration & Sanity

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. I believe that the way I have been living is not the only way — that change is genuinely possible

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I have witnessed or heard of other people being restored through recovery — and I am open to the same

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I am willing to define 'sanity' for myself: what it would look and feel like to live differently

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I am open to receiving help, guidance, or restoration from sources I don't fully understand

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I recognize that my own best thinking has not solved this problem — and that this is not a personal failure

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I believe that something in me — my core self, my capacity for health — has survived the damage addiction has done

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I am willing to take small, concrete steps toward sanity even before I have full certainty or belief

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. I have moments — however brief — of genuine hope that things can be different

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

YOUR EXERCISE

My Vision of Restored Sanity

Worksheet 5 of 10

Seeing What's Possible

You cannot move toward what you cannot see. This worksheet helps you build a concrete, personal vision of what restored sanity looks and feels like in your specific life — not an abstract ideal, but a real, imaginable, achievable direction.

Mapping Current Insanity

1. Describe your current state honestly: what does life look and feel like when the insanity of addiction is most active? Be specific across physical, emotional, relational, and daily-functioning dimensions.

Honest current state...

2. What recurring thoughts or beliefs characterize your most 'insane' thinking? Write them out.

Honest current state...

3. What does a typical bad day look like — the kind of day where the insanity is running the show?

Honest current state...

Building the Vision of Sanity

1. If you were restored to sanity — genuinely, sustainably — what would your daily thinking feel like? What thoughts would come naturally that currently don't?

2. What would your relationships look like in restored sanity? How would you show up differently with the people who matter most to you?

3. What would your emotional life look like — your baseline state, your capacity for joy, your ability to tolerate difficulty?

4. What would you do differently — in your choices, your routines, your responses to stress — if you were living in restored sanity?

5. Write a full paragraph describing a single day in your restored life. Make it specific, personal, and genuinely hopeful.

YOUR EXERCISE

Evidence of Hope & Restoration

Worksheet 7 of 10

The Evidence Already Exists

Step Two asks you to 'come to believe.' Belief is not born in a vacuum — it is built on evidence. This worksheet helps you find and inventory the evidence that restoration is possible: in other people's stories, in moments from your own life, and in the small signs of hope that have been present even in the hardest seasons.

Evidence in Other People's Stories

1. Who have you met in recovery — in meetings, in treatment, in your personal life — whose restoration to sanity gives you evidence that it is possible?

Evidence in others' recovery...

2. What is it about their story specifically that speaks to you? What do they have now that you want?

Evidence in others' recovery...

3. If the program has worked for other people — people whose situations were as desperate as yours — what does that tell you about Step Two's promise?

Evidence in others' recovery...

Evidence in Your Own Story

1. Describe a moment when you were carried through something you could not have gotten through on your own. What or who helped you?

2. What changes have already occurred in your life since entering recovery — however small — that suggest restoration is possible?

3. What moments of clarity, peace, connection, or genuine hope have you experienced in recovery, even briefly? What do they tell you about Step Two?

4. Complete this: "The evidence that restoration is already beginning in my life includes _____."

YOUR EXERCISE

Writing My Step Two Statement

Worksheet 8 of 10

Your Statement of Belief

A Step Two statement is an honest account of where you are in the process of coming to believe — not where you think you should be, not a performance of faith you don't yet have, but the honest truth of where you stand right now, and the direction you are moving.

Articulating Your Current Belief

1. Write your current honest position regarding a Power greater than yourself. Include your doubts, your openness, and any emerging belief. This is not a test — there are no wrong answers.

2. Write a description of the insanity you are asking to be restored from. Be specific — what specific patterns of thought and behavior are you naming here?

3. Write your understanding of what 'restoration to sanity' means for you personally — what specific changes you are asking for and hoping to receive.

4. Now write the complete Step Two statement in your own words. Begin: "I came to believe — or I am willing to believe — that _____ could restore me to sanity by _____."

YOUR EXERCISE

Step Two Action Plan

Worksheet 10 of 10

From Belief to Action

'Came to believe' is not a passive state — it is a direction of travel. This action plan translates the insights of Step Two into concrete commitments.

Immediate Actions (This Week)

1. What is the one most important insight from this intensive that you are committing to act on this week?

2. Which barrier to belief will you take one specific step toward addressing this week?

3. What spiritual practice will you begin or deepen this week? Name it specifically and schedule it.

4. With whom will you share your Step Two work this week — your statement, your struggles, your emerging beliefs?

My Step Two Declaration

This is your closing declaration — a statement of where you are, what you are coming to believe, and what you are committing to.

1. Write your complete, personal Step Two declaration. You might begin: "I, _____, came to believe — or I am beginning to believe — that _____ could restore me to sanity. The specific insanity I am asking to be freed from is _____."

2. What is your greatest hope for what becomes possible as Step Two takes root in your life?

3. Write a brief letter to a newcomer who is resistant to Step Two — someone who was exactly where you were. What would you tell them from your own honest experience?
