

# Step Eleven

NA Deep Dive · The Recovery Files

Prayer & Meditation — Conscious Contact with a Higher Power

"We 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."

Prayer · Speaking to your Higher Power · Meditation · Listening in stillness · Alignment · His will, not mine

## In this workbook

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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 4 · READING

## What Is Step Eleven? — Sought Through Prayer and Meditation

"We 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."

Step Eleven is the spiritual engine of sustained recovery. If Steps One through Three established a relationship with a Higher Power, and Steps Four through Ten cleared the internal wreckage that blocked that relationship, Step Eleven is the ongoing practice that deepens, maintains, and draws daily strength from that relationship.

The step contains three distinct components. The first is "sought through prayer and meditation" — the twin practices of spiritual communication. Prayer is talking to your Higher Power. Meditation is listening. Together they form a two-way communication channel. Neither one alone is sufficient. Prayer without meditation is a monologue. Meditation without prayer is passive.

The second component is "to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him." The word "improve" is critical — it assumes that conscious contact already exists and that it can be deepened over time. The phrase "as we understood Him" preserves the radical inclusivity of the twelve-step approach — your conception of a Higher Power is yours. It can evolve. It can be uncertain.

The third component is "praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out." This is perhaps the most revolutionary idea in Step Eleven. The addict's natural prayer is: "Give me what I want. Fix this situation. Remove this discomfort." Step Eleven redirects prayer toward understanding what your Higher Power wants for you, and receiving the strength to actually do it.

For people in recovery, Step Eleven addresses the fundamental spiritual problem that underlies addiction: disconnection. Active addiction is a state of profound disconnection — from self, from others, from reality, and from any source of meaning beyond the substance. Step Eleven ensures that the most important connection of all — the connection to a Higher Power — is not left to chance but is actively cultivated, daily, through intentional spiritual practice.

### Reflection Questions

1. What is your current understanding of prayer? Has it evolved since you entered recovery, or are you still operating with childhood definitions?

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2. What does "conscious contact" feel like when you experience it? If you have not experienced it, what do you imagine it might feel like?

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3. How do you react to the idea of praying "only for knowledge of His will"? Does this feel liberating or threatening? Why?

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4. Where are you on the spectrum between "established practice" and "not sure where to begin" with prayer and meditation?

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5. What is your current conception of a Higher Power? How has it changed since the beginning of your recovery?

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#### CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 1 OF 5

### Conscious Contact & Spiritual Awareness

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

1. I experience moments of connection with something greater than myself on a regular basis

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I am able to recognize spiritual guidance — through intuition, circumstances, other people, or inner knowing

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. My understanding of my Higher Power has evolved and deepened since entering recovery

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I feel that my relationship with my Higher Power is genuine and personal, not formulaic

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I maintain spiritual awareness throughout my day, not just during formal prayer and meditation

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I have had moments of clarity, peace, or direction that I attribute to conscious contact

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I am comfortable with spiritual uncertainty — I don't need to have everything figured out to practice Step Eleven

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. I can differentiate between spiritual experience and emotional excitement or wishful thinking

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

### YOUR EXERCISE

## Higher Power Conception Map

"As We Understood Him" — Defining Your Own Conception

Why This Matters

You cannot improve conscious contact with a Higher Power you haven't defined. This exercise is not about theological certainty — it is about clarifying, however imperfectly, what YOUR Higher Power looks like. Your conception can be uncertain, evolving, and incomplete.

### Traditional God — A personal, loving Creator actively involved in my life

How much does this conception resonate with your experience? (1 = not at all, 5 = deeply)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

What draws you to or repels you from this conception? Why?

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Have you experienced this Higher Power in your recovery? When? What happened?

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### Nature / Universe — The order, beauty, and power of the natural world

How much does this conception resonate with your experience? (1 = not at all, 5 = deeply)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

What draws you to or repels you from this conception? Why?

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Have you experienced this Higher Power in your recovery? When? What happened?

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### **Group Conscience — The collective wisdom and power of the recovery community**

How much does this conception resonate with your experience? (1 = not at all, 5 = deeply)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

What draws you to or repels you from this conception? Why?

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Have you experienced this Higher Power in your recovery? When? What happened?

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### **Love — The force of unconditional love that transcends individual understanding**

How much does this conception resonate with your experience? (1 = not at all, 5 = deeply)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

What draws you to or repels you from this conception? Why?

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Have you experienced this Higher Power in your recovery? When? What happened?

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### **Higher Consciousness — The deepest, wisest part of myself beyond ego**

How much does this conception resonate with your experience? (1 = not at all, 5 = deeply)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

What draws you to or repels you from this conception? Why?

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Have you experienced this Higher Power in your recovery? When? What happened?

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### **Mystery / The Unknown — Something I cannot name but sense is real**

How much does this conception resonate with your experience? (1 = not at all, 5 = deeply)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

What draws you to or repels you from this conception? Why?

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Have you experienced this Higher Power in your recovery? When? What happened?

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### **Spiritual Principles — Truth, love, honesty, compassion as living forces**

How much does this conception resonate with your experience? (1 = not at all, 5 = deeply)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

What draws you to or repels you from this conception? Why?

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Have you experienced this Higher Power in your recovery? When? What happened?

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### My Own Conception — Something unique that doesn't fit the above categories

How much does this conception resonate with your experience? (1 = not at all, 5 = deeply)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

What draws you to or repels you from this conception? Why?

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Have you experienced this Higher Power in your recovery? When? What happened?

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### Your Higher Power — A Personal Statement

1. Write a description of YOUR Higher Power as you currently understand it. It does not need to be complete, certain, or theologically correct.

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2. What are the qualities of this Higher Power? (Loving? Powerful? Mysterious? Patient? Present? Guiding?) Name at least three qualities.

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3. How does this Higher Power communicate with you? Through feelings? Through other people? Through circumstances? Through an inner voice?

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4. What do you need from this Higher Power in your recovery right now? Not what you want — what do you need?

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5. How has your conception of a Higher Power changed since you entered recovery? What caused the change?

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## YOUR EXERCISE

### Your Spiritual Relationship History

Mapping the Journey from Then to Now

Why Your History Matters

Your spiritual history shapes your spiritual present. The messages you received about God, prayer, religion, and spirituality — from childhood through active addiction — created patterns that still influence your Step Eleven practice today.

#### Childhood Spiritual Messages

1. What were you taught about God/Higher Power as a child? Was it positive, negative, neutral, or absent?

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2. Was prayer or meditation modeled for you? Did the adults in your life practice a visible spiritual life?

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3. What messages did you receive about religion? Were they associated with love, fear, obligation, hypocrisy, comfort, or rejection?

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4. Was there a specific experience in childhood that shaped your relationship to spirituality? Describe it.

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5. If you could summarize the childhood message about spirituality in one sentence, what would it be?

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### **Spirituality in Active Addiction**

1. What happened to your spiritual life during active addiction? Did it fade, distort, intensify, or disappear entirely?

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2. Did you pray during active addiction? If so, what did those prayers sound like?

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3. Did you feel anger, abandonment, or betrayal toward God/Higher Power during your addiction?

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4. Was there a moment — even a brief one — where you sensed spiritual presence during the darkest period of your addiction?

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5. How did active addiction affect your willingness to trust a Higher Power? What trust was broken?

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### **Spirituality in Recovery — Now**

1. How has your understanding of a Higher Power changed since entering recovery? What changed it?

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2. What is the most meaningful spiritual experience you have had in recovery so far? Describe it in detail.

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3. What old spiritual messages still influence your practice today? Which ones need to be released?

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4. If you could write a new spiritual message to replace the old one, what would it say?

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5. Where do you want your spiritual relationship to be one year from now? What will it take to get there?

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## PART 2 OF 4 · READING

## The Nature of Prayer: More Than Asking for Things

Most people enter recovery with a conception of prayer that is limited, distorted, or altogether absent. Step Eleven requires a radical reimagining of prayer — not as ritual performance, not as desperate bargaining, not as superstitious wish-fulfillment, but as genuine communication with a Higher Power.

GRATITUDE PRAYER is the practice of acknowledging what has already been given. For someone in recovery, the list begins with the most fundamental gift: sobriety itself. Gratitude prayer reorients the mind from scarcity to abundance, from complaint to appreciation, from entitlement to humility.

SURRENDER PRAYER is the practice of releasing outcomes and relinquishing control. "Thy will, not mine, be done" is not a formula of defeat; it is a declaration of trust. Surrender prayer is often the hardest form of prayer for people in recovery because it directly confronts the illusion of control that the addictive mind clings to.

PETITION PRAYER is asking for what you need — but Step Eleven transforms the content. Instead of "Give me what I want," Step Eleven teaches: "Show me what you want for me, and give me the strength to do it." This moves the recovering person from the center of the universe to a participant in something larger.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER is praying for others — and it is one of the most therapeutically powerful forms of prayer in recovery. When you pray for someone you resent, something remarkable happens: the resentment begins to lose its grip.

LISTENING PRAYER is prayer that is less about words and more about receptivity. It is the prayer that asks a question and then creates space for the answer to emerge — not as an audible voice, but as an intuition, a knowing, a shift in perspective.

Prayer is not a technique to be mastered but a relationship to be cultivated. There will be days when prayer feels empty, mechanical, or pointless. These days are not evidence that prayer doesn't work — they are evidence that you are human.

### Reflection Questions

1. Which form of prayer — gratitude, surrender, petition, intercessory, or listening — is most natural for you? Which do you avoid?

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2. Have you ever experienced a shift through prayer — a moment where anger softened, clarity emerged, or peace replaced anxiety? Describe it.

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3. What is your honest reaction to surrender prayer? Can you identify the specific fear or resistance that makes "Thy will, not mine" difficult?

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4. Have you ever tried praying for someone you resent? What happened? If not, are you willing to try?

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5. How would your relationship with prayer change if you viewed it as a conversation rather than a performance?

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#### CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 2 OF 5

### Prayer Practice & Willingness

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

1. I pray or communicate with my Higher Power on a daily basis, not just in crisis

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. My prayer life includes gratitude and surrender, not just requests for what I want

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I am willing to pray even when I don't feel like it or when it feels meaningless

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I pray for knowledge of my Higher Power's will rather than demanding specific outcomes

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I have moved beyond childhood conceptions of prayer toward a mature spiritual practice

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I can pray honestly — including admitting doubt, anger, confusion, and fear to my Higher Power

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I pray for others, not just myself — including people I resent or find difficult

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. I understand that the purpose of prayer is to change me, not to change my circumstances

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

### CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 3 OF 5

### Surrender & Alignment with Higher Will

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

1. I am willing to let go of my plans when they conflict with what I believe my Higher Power is directing

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I can recognize when self-will is running the show — when I am trying to force outcomes or control situations

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I practice the principle of "Thy will, not mine" even when I am afraid of the outcome

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I have experienced situations where surrendering my will led to better outcomes than I could have engineered

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I understand that surrender is not passivity — it is active participation in a different kind of power

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I am growing in my ability to distinguish between self-will (what I demand) and my Higher Power's will (what I am shown)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I can sit with not knowing what the "right" answer is without forcing a decision prematurely

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. I am less attached to outcomes than I was at the beginning of my recovery

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

### YOUR EXERCISE

### Prayer Practice Explorer

Expanding Beyond "Give Me What I Want"

The Purpose

Most people pray in only one or two ways — usually petition (asking for things) and sometimes gratitude. This exercise introduces you to six forms of prayer. Try each one. Notice which feel natural and which provoke resistance.

## Gratitude Prayer

### WHAT IT IS

Acknowledging what has already been given — sobriety, breath, another day, second chances.

Write a gratitude prayer right now. List at least five specific things you are grateful for today, and speak them to your Higher Power.

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How did this form of prayer feel? Natural? Uncomfortable? Powerful? Empty?

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## Surrender Prayer

### WHAT IT IS

"Thy will, not mine, be done." Releasing outcomes, relinquishing control, trusting the process.

What are you holding onto right now that you need to surrender? Write a prayer of release — naming the specific thing and expressing your willingness to let go.

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How did this form of prayer feel? Natural? Uncomfortable? Powerful? Empty?

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## Petition Prayer — Step Eleven Style

### WHAT IT IS

Not "give me what I want" but "show me what you want for me and give me the strength to do it."

Write a petition prayer that asks only for knowledge of your Higher Power's will and the power to carry it out.

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How did this form of prayer feel? Natural? Uncomfortable? Powerful? Empty?

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## **Intercessory Prayer**

### **WHAT IT IS**

Praying for others — especially those you resent, those who are suffering, and those new in recovery.

Pray for three people: someone you love, someone you are struggling with, and someone new to recovery. Write the prayer for each person.

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How did this form of prayer feel? Natural? Uncomfortable? Powerful? Empty?

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## **Brutally Honest Prayer**

### **WHAT IT IS**

Prayer that holds nothing back — including doubt, anger, confusion, fear, and the feeling that no one is listening.

Write a prayer where you hold absolutely nothing back. If you are angry at your Higher Power, say so. Complete honesty is the prerequisite for genuine contact.

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How did this form of prayer feel? Natural? Uncomfortable? Powerful? Empty?

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## Listening Prayer

### WHAT IT IS

Prayer that asks a question and then waits in silence for the answer to emerge — through intuition, clarity, or peace.

Ask your Higher Power one question that you genuinely need guidance on. Write the question, then sit in silence for at least two minutes. Write whatever comes — even if it is "nothing came."

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How did this form of prayer feel? Natural? Uncomfortable? Powerful? Empty?

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## Prayer Practice Summary

1. Which form of prayer felt most natural to you? Why do you think that is?

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2. Which form of prayer generated the most resistance? What does that resistance tell you?

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3. How is your prayer life different now than it was at the beginning of your recovery?

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4. Commit to trying one NEW form of prayer this week. Which one will you try, and when?

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### YOUR EXERCISE

## Self-Will vs. Higher Will

Distinguishing My Demands from Spiritual Direction

The Core Struggle

Step Eleven asks you to pray for 'knowledge of His will for us' — but the addictive mind is a master of disguising self-will as Higher Power guidance. This exercise helps you develop the critical discernment between 'what I want' and 'what I am being shown.'

### Where Self-Will Is Currently Active

Identify five areas of your life where you are currently trying to force outcomes, control situations, or demand that things go your way.

#### AREA 1

What situation are you trying to control?

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What outcome are you demanding?

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What would surrender look like here?

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#### AREA 2

What situation are you trying to control?

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What outcome are you demanding?

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What would surrender look like here?

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### AREA 3

What situation are you trying to control?

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What outcome are you demanding?

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What would surrender look like here?

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### AREA 4

What situation are you trying to control?

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What outcome are you demanding?

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What would surrender look like here?

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AREA 5

What situation are you trying to control?

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What outcome are you demanding?

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What would surrender look like here?

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## Discernment Framework

How to Tell the Difference

Self-will typically feels urgent, demanding, fear-driven, and insistent on a specific outcome.

Spiritual guidance typically feels calm, clear, patient, and focused on the next right action.

Self-will says 'I must have this.' Spiritual guidance says 'Do the next right thing and trust the outcome.'

1. Describe a time when you were CERTAIN you knew what was best, pursued it with self-will, and the outcome was harmful or disappointing.

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2. Describe a time when you surrendered an outcome, let go of your demand, and the result was better than what you had planned.

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3. What physical or emotional signals help you distinguish between self-will and spiritual guidance?

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4. How do you test guidance? What process do you use to confirm that what feels like spiritual direction is not just self-will in disguise?

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5. Write a prayer specifically asking for help distinguishing between your will and your Higher Power's will today.

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### YOUR EXERCISE

## Guidance Discernment

Learning to Recognize Spiritual Direction

How Guidance Arrives

Spiritual guidance rarely arrives as a thunderbolt. More often it comes as: a persistent intuition, a growing clarity, a feeling of peace about one option and unease about another, advice from a trusted person that resonates deeply, or a quiet inner knowing.

## Guidance in Hindsight

Looking backward, identify three times in your recovery when you believe you received spiritual guidance — even if you didn't recognize it at the time.

### INSTANCE 1

What was the situation?

Describe the situation...

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How did the guidance arrive?

Describe how the guidance came...

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What happened when you followed (or ignored) the guidance?

Describe the outcome...

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### INSTANCE 2

What was the situation?

Describe the situation...

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How did the guidance arrive?

Describe how the guidance came...

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What happened when you followed (or ignored) the guidance?

Describe the outcome...

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### INSTANCE 3

What was the situation?

Describe the situation...

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How did the guidance arrive?

Describe how the guidance came...

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What happened when you followed (or ignored) the guidance?

Describe the outcome...

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## Testing Guidance — A Framework

### Four Tests for Guidance

Not every impulse is guidance. Before acting on what feels like spiritual direction, test it: (1) Does it align with recovery principles? (2) Would you be comfortable sharing this decision with your sponsor? (3) Does it produce peace or anxiety? (4) Is it consistent over time, or a fleeting impulse?

1. Identify a current decision you are facing. What feels like the "guided" option? Apply the four tests above. What does the testing reveal?

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2. Can you identify a time when you mistook self-will for spiritual guidance? What happened?

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3. Who in your life helps you test guidance? How do you use them in the discernment process?

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4. Write about an area where you currently feel uncertain about guidance. What question would you ask your Higher Power?

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## PART 3 OF 4 · READING

## The Practice of Meditation: Learning to Listen

If prayer is speaking to your Higher Power, meditation is creating the conditions for listening. Meditation is the practice of intentional stillness, focused attention, and receptive awareness.

The difficulty of meditation for recovering addicts is not surprising. Addiction is, among other things, a chronic avoidance of the present moment. Substances alter consciousness precisely because being fully present is intolerable. The addictive mind is a mind in perpetual motion, constantly seeking the next distraction, the next escape. Meditation asks this mind to stop, sit, be present, and listen.

This is why meditation in recovery is not merely a wellness practice — it is a recovery practice. Every time you sit still and observe your own mind without acting on its impulses, you are building the capacity that addiction destroyed: the ability to be present with reality without needing to alter it.

BREATH-FOCUSED MEDITATION is the most accessible starting point. Simply direct your attention to your breathing. When your mind wanders, gently redirect back to the breath.

OBSERVATIONAL MEDITATION is the practice of watching your own thoughts as if they were clouds passing across a sky — you do not follow them or push them away, you simply notice them and let them pass. This develops the critical capacity to have a thought without acting on it.

WALKING MEDITATION transforms movement into a meditative practice — bringing full attention to each step. This is valuable for people who find sitting still extremely difficult.

MEDITATIVE READING is the practice of reading spiritual or recovery literature slowly, pausing between passages to absorb and reflect.

Start small. Five minutes is sufficient to begin. Consistency matters more than duration. The goal is to make meditation as automatic as brushing your teeth — a non-negotiable daily practice that maintains your spiritual hygiene.

### Reflection Questions

1. What is your honest experience with meditation? Have you tried it? What happened? What resistance did you encounter?

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2. Which form of meditation — breath-focused, observational, guided, walking, or meditative reading — appeals to you most?

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3. Can you see the connection between the addictive mind's need to escape the present moment and the meditative practice of being present?

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4. What is the shortest amount of time you could realistically commit to daily meditation practice? Be honest — five minutes counts.

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5. What thoughts, feelings, or experiences are you most afraid of encountering in silence? What are you running from when you avoid stillness?

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#### CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 4 OF 5

### Meditation & Listening Practice

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

1. I practice some form of meditation or intentional stillness on a regular basis  
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
2. I can sit in silence for at least five minutes without needing to distract myself  
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
3. I am developing the ability to observe my thoughts without being controlled by them  
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
4. I make intentional space for listening — not just speaking — in my spiritual practice  
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
5. I have explored different meditation approaches and found methods that work for me  
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
6. I notice when my mind is racing and can gently redirect my attention to the present  
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
7. I am growing in my ability to distinguish between my own will and spiritual guidance  
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
8. I treat meditation as a skill that requires practice and patience, not perfection  
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

**YOUR EXERCISE****Meditation Methods Lab**

Finding the Practice That Works for You

Experiential Learning

Reading about meditation is not meditating. This exercise requires you to PRACTICE each method — actually do it, not just read the instructions — and then reflect on the experience.

**Breath-Focused Meditation****INSTRUCTIONS**

Sit comfortably. Close your eyes. Direct attention to your breathing — the rise and fall of your chest, the sensation of air at your nostrils. When your mind wanders, gently return to the breath. Practice for 5 minutes.

After practicing this method: What happened? What did you notice? What was difficult?

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Could you see yourself practicing this method daily? Why or why not?

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Sustainability rating: How likely are you to practice this regularly?

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

**Observational Meditation****INSTRUCTIONS**

Sit in silence. Observe your thoughts as they arise. Do not follow them, judge them, or push them away. Simply notice: "There is a thought about work... There is a worry about tomorrow..." Watch them pass like clouds. Practice for 5 minutes.

After practicing this method: What happened? What did you notice? What was difficult?

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Could you see yourself practicing this method daily? Why or why not?

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Sustainability rating: How likely are you to practice this regularly?

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

## Body Scan Meditation

### INSTRUCTIONS

Starting at the top of your head, slowly move your attention through each part of your body — forehead, jaw, neck, shoulders, arms, chest, stomach, hips, legs, feet. At each location, simply notice whatever sensation is present without trying to change it. Practice for 7-10 minutes.

After practicing this method: What happened? What did you notice? What was difficult?

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Could you see yourself practicing this method daily? Why or why not?

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Sustainability rating: How likely are you to practice this regularly?

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

## Walking Meditation

### INSTRUCTIONS

Walk slowly and deliberately. Bring full attention to each step: the lifting of the foot, the movement forward, the placement of the foot, the shift of weight. When your mind wanders, return attention to the physical sensation of walking. Practice for 10 minutes.

After practicing this method: What happened? What did you notice? What was difficult?

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Could you see yourself practicing this method daily? Why or why not?

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Sustainability rating: How likely are you to practice this regularly?

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

## Meditative Reading

### INSTRUCTIONS

Choose a passage from recovery literature. Read one sentence at a time. After each sentence, pause and sit with it. Let it settle. Do not analyze — absorb. Read no more than one page in 10 minutes.

After practicing this method: What happened? What did you notice? What was difficult?

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Could you see yourself practicing this method daily? Why or why not?

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Sustainability rating: How likely are you to practice this regularly?

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

## Meditation Summary

1. Which meditation method felt most natural? Which will you adopt as your primary practice?

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2. Which method was most difficult? What specifically made it hard?

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3. What did you discover about your own mind during these practices? What patterns did you notice?

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4. Commit to a daily meditation practice: What method? What time? How many minutes?

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### **YOUR EXERCISE**

## **Learning to Listen**

The Other Half of Prayer — Receiving Guidance

Why Listening Is Hard

The addictive mind is a broadcasting station — always transmitting, never receiving. Learning to listen to your Higher Power is learning to turn down the volume of self-will, fear, and mental chatter so that the quieter signal of spiritual guidance can be heard.

### **Listening Practice 1: The Question and the Silence**

Write a specific question you need guidance on below. Then close your eyes and sit in silence for three full minutes. Do not try to think of an answer — simply hold the question and wait. After three minutes, write whatever comes to mind — even if it is "nothing."

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What did you learn from this listening practice? What surprised you?

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### **Listening Practice 2: Reading as Listening**

Open any piece of recovery or spiritual literature to a random page. Read slowly until one sentence or phrase stops you — a sentence that feels like it was meant for you today. Write the sentence below and reflect on what it might be telling you.

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What did you learn from this listening practice? What surprised you?

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### **Listening Practice 3: Listening to the Day**

Review today (or yesterday) looking for moments where you may have received guidance that you didn't recognize at the time — a conversation that shifted your thinking, a circumstance that redirected you, an unexpected feeling of peace or clarity.

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What did you learn from this listening practice? What surprised you?

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### **Listening Practice 4: The Body as Receiver**

Sit quietly and direct attention inward. Ask your Higher Power: "What do I need to know right now?" Then scan your body for any response — a feeling of warmth, lightness, tightness, or release.

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What did you learn from this listening practice? What surprised you?

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## Listening Practice 5: Listening Through Others

Think of the last three pieces of advice, feedback, or observation that other people offered you. Write them down. Is there a pattern? Might any of these have been your Higher Power speaking through other people?

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What did you learn from this listening practice? What surprised you?

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## Listening Summary

1. Which listening practice produced the strongest response? What made it effective for you?

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2. Were you able to distinguish between "hearing your own thoughts" and "receiving something from beyond yourself"? What was the difference?

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3. What conditions help you listen most effectively? (Silence? Nature? Morning? Writing? A specific place?)

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4. How will you incorporate listening into your daily Step Eleven practice? Be specific.

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## PART 4 OF 4 · READING

## The Gifts of Step Eleven: What Consistent Practice Produces

Step Eleven is sometimes experienced as the most demanding step — it asks for daily commitment to a practice that does not always produce immediate, tangible results. But the long-term gifts of consistent Step Eleven practice are among the most transformative experiences available in recovery.

**INTUITIVE GUIDANCE** — The most commonly reported gift of sustained Step Eleven practice is the development of intuitive guidance. Recovering people who practice prayer and meditation consistently describe a phenomenon where they begin to "just know" what to do. The NA Basic Text describes this as the "intuitive thought or decision" that comes from maintaining conscious contact.

**PEACE THAT IS NOT DEPENDENT ON CIRCUMSTANCES** — One of the most remarkable gifts is the development of an internal peace that is not contingent upon external conditions. Underneath surface emotions, there exists a deeper current of okay-ness — a groundedness that persists even when circumstances are difficult.

**FREEDOM FROM THE BONDAGE OF SELF** — The addictive mind is profoundly self-centered. Step Eleven practice gradually shifts the center. Through prayer and meditation, the recovering person begins to experience moments of freedom from the tyranny of self-obsession.

**RESILIENCE IN DIFFICULTY** — Consistent Step Eleven practice does not prevent difficulty — but it radically changes your relationship to difficulty. The person with a strong spiritual practice enters crisis with resources that the spiritually disconnected person does not have.

**A LIFE OF MEANING AND PURPOSE** — Perhaps the deepest gift of Step Eleven is the gradual revelation of purpose. When you consistently ask, "What is your will for me?" and then listen, act, and observe the results, you discover that you are useful — that your experience, including your addiction and recovery, has value.

Step Eleven is not a sentence. It is a gift. It is the practice that makes sustained, joyful recovery not just possible but probable.

### Reflection Questions

1. Have you experienced any of the gifts described — intuitive guidance, circumstance-independent peace, freedom from self-centeredness, resilience in difficulty, or a sense of purpose?

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2. If you have NOT experienced these gifts, what do you think is blocking them? Is it inconsistency, self-will, doubt, or something else?

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3. Can you identify a time in your recovery when you "intuitively knew" the right thing to do? What was the situation?

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4. What would "peace that is not dependent on circumstances" look like in your daily life?

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5. What purpose or meaning is emerging in your recovery? If none has emerged yet, what would you like to ask your Higher Power about?

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#### CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 5 OF 5

#### Integration into Daily Living

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

1. My spiritual practice has a consistent structure — I practice at regular times in regular ways

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I bring spiritual principles into ordinary moments — not just during formal practice

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I can use brief spiritual tools (quick prayers, moment of pause, breath awareness) during difficult moments throughout the day

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. My spiritual life and my daily life are becoming more integrated rather than compartmentalized

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I continue to grow and experiment with my spiritual practice rather than going through the motions

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I have a support system (sponsor, spiritual advisor, recovery community) that supports my Step Eleven practice

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I am able to maintain my spiritual practice even during periods of doubt, difficulty, or emotional turmoil

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. I view Step Eleven not as an obligation but as a source of strength, clarity, and peace in my recovery

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

### YOUR EXERCISE

## Obstacles Inventory

Naming What Blocks Your Conscious Contact

Why Obstacles Matter

Every person in recovery encounters obstacles to Step Eleven practice. Naming them is the first step toward addressing them. An unnamed obstacle operates in the dark, silently undermining your spiritual practice.

### Religious Wounding

Past negative experiences with organized religion, abusive spiritual authority, or punitive theology.

How active is this obstacle in YOUR spiritual life? (1 = barely present, 5 = major barrier)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this obstacle specifically show up in your life?

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What would it look like to reduce this obstacle — not eliminate it, but reduce it enough to practice in spite of it?

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### Intellectual Resistance

Skepticism, need for empirical evidence, discomfort with concepts that cannot be scientifically proven.

How active is this obstacle in YOUR spiritual life? (1 = barely present, 5 = major barrier)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this obstacle specifically show up in your life?

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What would it look like to reduce this obstacle — not eliminate it, but reduce it enough to practice in spite of it?

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### **Self-Will & Control**

Difficulty surrendering outcomes, needing to be in charge, reluctance to be guided by anything other than your own judgment.

How active is this obstacle in YOUR spiritual life? (1 = barely present, 5 = major barrier)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this obstacle specifically show up in your life?

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What would it look like to reduce this obstacle — not eliminate it, but reduce it enough to practice in spite of it?

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### **Distraction & Busyness**

Using constant activity, technology, noise, and productivity to avoid the stillness that prayer and meditation require.

How active is this obstacle in YOUR spiritual life? (1 = barely present, 5 = major barrier)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this obstacle specifically show up in your life?

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What would it look like to reduce this obstacle — not eliminate it, but reduce it enough to practice in spite of it?

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### Feeling Unworthy

Believing you don't deserve a relationship with a Higher Power, that your past disqualifies you.

How active is this obstacle in YOUR spiritual life? (1 = barely present, 5 = major barrier)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this obstacle specifically show up in your life?

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What would it look like to reduce this obstacle — not eliminate it, but reduce it enough to practice in spite of it?

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### Inconsistency & Giving Up

Starting strong but losing momentum, missing days and then abandoning the practice entirely.

How active is this obstacle in YOUR spiritual life? (1 = barely present, 5 = major barrier)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this obstacle specifically show up in your life?

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What would it look like to reduce this obstacle — not eliminate it, but reduce it enough to practice in spite of it?

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### Unrealistic Expectations

Expecting dramatic spiritual experiences or emotional fireworks — and dismissing quiet, gradual growth as "not working."

How active is this obstacle in YOUR spiritual life? (1 = barely present, 5 = major barrier)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this obstacle specifically show up in your life?

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What would it look like to reduce this obstacle — not eliminate it, but reduce it enough to practice in spite of it?

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### Anger at God / Higher Power

Resentment toward a Higher Power who "allowed" suffering, addiction, loss, or trauma.

How active is this obstacle in YOUR spiritual life? (1 = barely present, 5 = major barrier)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this obstacle specifically show up in your life?

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What would it look like to reduce this obstacle — not eliminate it, but reduce it enough to practice in spite of it?

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### Obstacles Summary

1. Which obstacle scored highest? Were you aware of it before this exercise, or is it a new recognition?

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2. How have your obstacles to spiritual practice changed since entering recovery?

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3. Which obstacle would your sponsor or trusted person most want you to address?

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4. Write a statement of willingness: "Despite [name your biggest obstacle], I am willing to [name your commitment to practice]."

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### YOUR EXERCISE

## Seven-Day Practice Log

Building Consistency Through Daily Tracking

The Power of Tracking

What gets measured gets done. This log tracks your prayer and meditation practice for seven consecutive days — not to generate guilt for missed days, but to build awareness of your patterns and create momentum.

**Day 1 — Practice Log**

## MORNING PRAYER

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## MEDITATION

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## CONSCIOUS CONTACT MOMENTS

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## EVENING REFLECTION

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**Day 2 — Practice Log**

## MORNING PRAYER

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## MEDITATION

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## CONSCIOUS CONTACT MOMENTS

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## EVENING REFLECTION

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**Day 3 — Practice Log**

## MORNING PRAYER

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## MEDITATION

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## CONSCIOUS CONTACT MOMENTS

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## EVENING REFLECTION

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**Day 4 — Practice Log**

## MORNING PRAYER

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## MEDITATION

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## CONSCIOUS CONTACT MOMENTS

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## EVENING REFLECTION

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**Day 5 — Practice Log**

## MORNING PRAYER

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## MEDITATION

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## CONSCIOUS CONTACT MOMENTS

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## EVENING REFLECTION

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**Day 6 — Practice Log**

## MORNING PRAYER

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## MEDITATION

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## CONSCIOUS CONTACT MOMENTS

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## EVENING REFLECTION

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**Day 7 — Practice Log**

## MORNING PRAYER

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## MEDITATION

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## CONSCIOUS CONTACT MOMENTS

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## EVENING REFLECTION

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**Seven-Day Review**

1. How many of the seven days did you actually practice prayer and meditation? What prevented practice on the days you missed?

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2. What pattern do you notice? Are mornings easier than evenings? Is one form of practice more consistent than the other?

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3. Did you experience any moments of genuine conscious contact during the week? Describe the most significant one.

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4. What did this week teach you about your Step Eleven practice? What adjustments will you make going forward?

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5. Rate your willingness to continue daily practice after this seven-day experiment. (1 = unlikely, 5 = committed)

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#### **YOUR EXERCISE**

### **Personal Step Eleven Blueprint**

Your Customized Daily Spiritual Practice Plan

Making It Yours

Having explored prayer, meditation, obstacles, discernment, and your spiritual history, you now have the material to design a personal Step Eleven practice that you will actually sustain. The best spiritual practice is not the most impressive one — it is the one you do.

## Morning Practice

1. What time will you begin your morning practice? (Be realistic — choose a time you can protect consistently.)

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2. What form of prayer will you use in the morning?

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3. What form of meditation will you practice? How many minutes?

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4. Write your morning prayer — the actual words you will speak or think each morning to begin your day.

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## Throughout the Day

1. What "touchstone" practices will you use during the day? (Brief prayers before meals? Moment of pause before reacting? Gratitude check at noon?)

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2. What will you do when you notice yourself disconnected from your Higher Power during the day?

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3. How will you bring Step Eleven into difficult moments — conflict, craving, anxiety, fear?

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4. Is there a prayer, phrase, or mantra you will carry with you throughout the day? What is it?

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### Evening Practice

1. What time will you do your evening spiritual practice? Where?

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2. What will your evening review include?

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3. Will you incorporate Step Ten inventory into your evening practice? How will the two steps work together?

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4. Write your evening prayer — the words you will close each day with.

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### Your Step Eleven Commitment Statement

Final Declaration

You have explored prayer, meditation, obstacles, discernment, and your spiritual history. You have designed a personal practice. Now commit to it — not perfectly, but consistently.

**My Step Eleven Commitment:**

I commit to seeking conscious contact with my Higher Power through... (Include your morning practice, daily touchstones, evening practice, and accountability plan.)

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**Why does Step Eleven matter to YOUR recovery? What is at stake if you neglect this practice?  
What becomes possible if you sustain it?**

Connect this commitment to your personal recovery story. What is at stake?

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