

INTRODUCTION TO THE 12-STEPS

Skills to Be Learned

- Identifying What Is and Is Not Controllable
- Understanding When to Let Go And When to Take Action
- Identifying One's Personal Source of Strength
- Increasing Motivation for Change

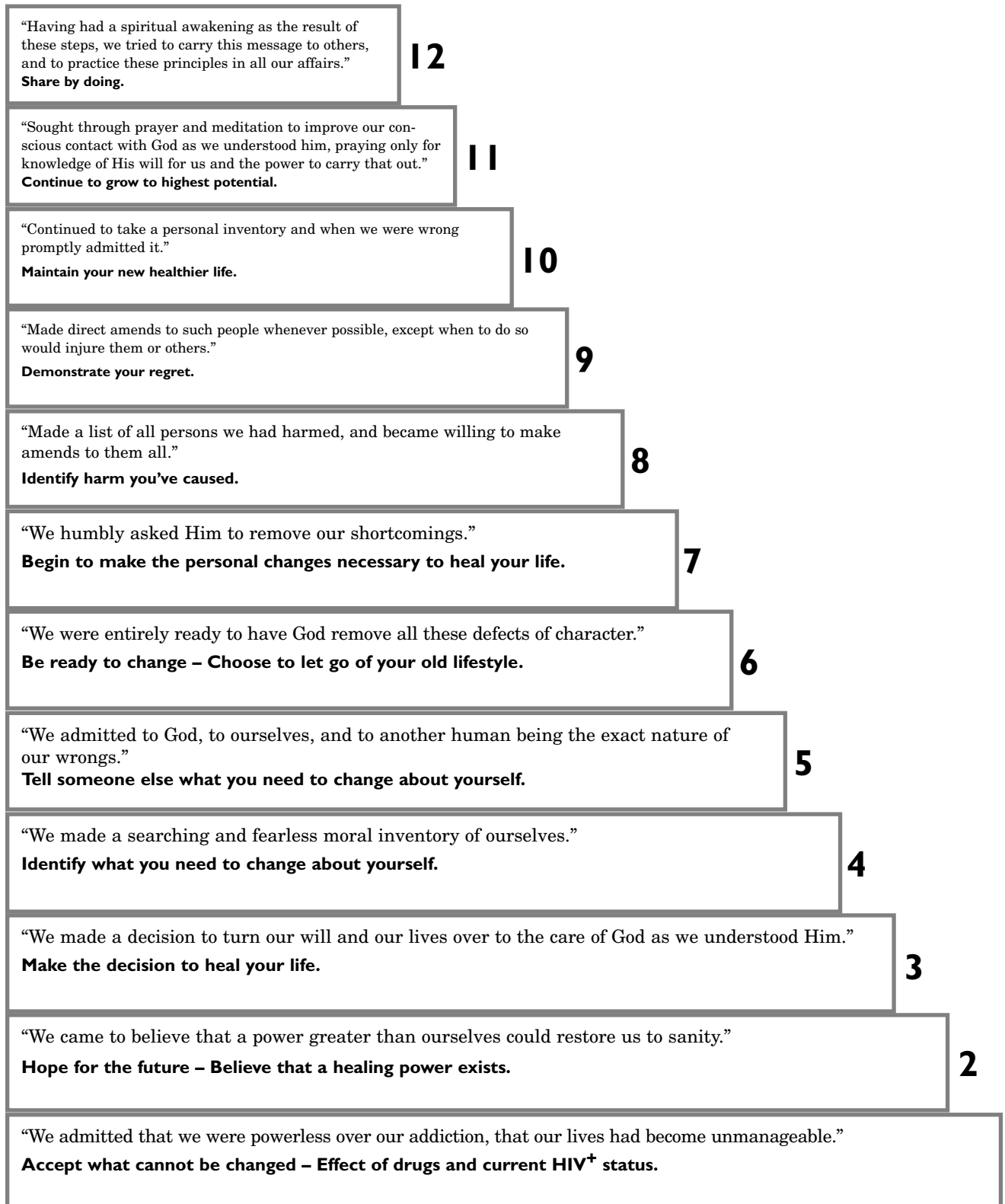
In this chapter we are going to introduce you to the 12-step philosophy of AA and NA (Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous). The philosophy can be helpful for people struggling with a variety of health problems, not only addiction, but also HIV. The 12-steps teach you that recovery not only involves being abstinent from drugs, it also involves changing your entire way of living—your attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

You've probably noticed that HHRP⁺ frequently refers to the serenity prayer:

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.

Clearly, as suggested by the prayer, the first order of business is to identify those things in your life that can't be changed so that you can "turn them over" or "let them go." By doing this you become empowered to identify what problems require your attention and you gain courage to carry out whatever actions are required to make the necessary changes in your life. Finding the right balance between "letting go" and "taking action" is a sign of wisdom. The 12-steps have helped many people find this balance, not only in the addictions but also in coping with chronic illness. Individuals who are HIV-positive may find the 12-steps particularly helpful because when coping with HIV it is essential that you know what you can control and what you cannot. This chapter will briefly introduce you to the 12-steps. This introduction to the steps does not take the traditional approach; rather, it provides a broad interpretation of the steps so that you can find what is meaningful to you. People spend their entire lives "working the steps"; therefore, this chapter is not meant to be comprehensive, and, in fact, it will cover some very important issues only superficially. You are strongly encouraged to attend 12-step groups in your community where you can get in-depth information and guidance about the 12-step program.

12 Steps in a Journey of Recovery



Step One

We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.

The meaning of the word “powerless” is often misinterpreted in the context of this step. How do you interpret the word “powerless” in this step? Consider the following:

- This step does **not** mean you are powerless to make changes in your life.
- As the serenity prayers suggests, your first priority is acceptance of things you cannot change. You have to begin with acknowledging that you have a problem.
- One thing you cannot change is the effect of drug use on your life; the chemical effect of the drug has enslaved you and you are powerless to change the drug’s negative effect.
- Your life has become unmanageable because the drug is in control.
- Once you admit your powerlessness, you empower yourself to begin to take control over those things in your life you can change—such as, the decision not to use drugs.
- **Therefore, this first step actually empowers you to begin your journey of recovery. You find serenity in acceptance of the things you cannot change, such as the negative effect of drug use in your life, and then can then begin to gain the courage to change the things you can.**

Let’s see how we can apply Step to HIV.

STEP ONE AND HIV

We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.

You are powerless over your HIV status

- you can't change your current HIV-seropositive status

This does not mean you are powerless over your actions

- you can do something to stay healthy

Acceptance of HIV infection leads to:

- awareness of health consequences
- good health care
- taking HIV related medications
- stopping risky behavior

**Acceptance of your HIV⁺ status
can empower you to take control of your life
and help you maintain your health.**

As shown in the illustration,

- You are powerless over the fact that you are now infected with HIV.
- Acceptance of powerlessness over HIV, does not mean that you could not have prevented being infected or that you can do nothing to stay healthy.
- Denying or minimizing the negative health consequences of being infected with HIV leads to unhealthy behaviors, such as not taking medications as prescribed.
- Thus, acceptance of the fact that you are now infected with HIV can actually empower you to make the changes in your life that are under your control and that can help you maintain your health.

Step Two

We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

No-one can define your “higher power” for you. What does “a power greater than ourselves” mean to you? Consider the following:

- For some people, their “higher power” is the God of their religious beliefs and practices.
- For others, it may be nature, love, the life force, chi, or energy.
- It could even be your strong desire for “sobriety” or “a healthy lifestyle”—that part of your being that is your source of strength to achieve sobriety and good health.
- You don’t need to be religious in the conventional sense to work the steps.

To summarize Steps 1 and 2—In Step 1 you accept that the effect of drugs on your life is beyond your control and that you have reached the point at which your life has become unmanageable. Then Step 2 tells you that there is hope for a better life if you truly believe that there is a source of strength available to you that can enable you to live a drug-free life.

Let’s see how we can apply this step to HIV infection.

STEP TWO AND HIV

We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Your higher power is:

- your personal source of serenity
- whatever empowers you
- whatever is healing for you

Restored "sanity":

- health of the mind
- health of the body
- health of the spirit

**Accept that you can not change your HIV+ status.
Believe that your life can change for the better.**

As shown in the illustration, and as we just discussed,

- Your higher power is
Your personal source of serenity, empowerment, healing.
- Being “restored to sanity” can be interpreted as improving your health.
Remember, good health may refer to the mind, body, and/or spirit.
So it does not necessarily mean regaining only physical health.

So, in Step 1 you accepted that you cannot change the fact that you are now HIV-positive, and in Step 2 you strengthened your belief that there is a healing power available to you that can help you heal your life on various levels

Step Three

We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

If “God is your higher power—your source of strength, however **you** define this—what does it mean to decide to turn your will and life over to God? Consider the following:

- It does **not** mean that:
 - you must be religious in order to work the steps
 - you surrender to another’s will

- It **does** mean that you have now made the decision to give up your old life of addiction and devote yourself to a new drug-free life based upon whatever your “higher power” represents (for example: serenity, spirituality, balance). You surrender to (you become) your source of strength.
- In this step you actually make your decision. It is the connection between your strong belief that a drug-free life is possible for you (Step 2) and taking action in Step 4.

Let’s see how this step could be applied to HIV

STEP THREE AND HIV

We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.

**With faith that your life can be healed,
give up your former self-image.**

**Devote yourself to the new life
represented by your higher power:**

- health
- enlightenment
- serenity
- love
- forgiveness

**Make the decision to give up your old life
and to devote yourself to a healthier new life.**

- Make the decision to give up living an unhealthy lifestyle.
- Make the decision to devote yourself to a new life that is spiritually, mentally, and physically healing—surrender yourself to (become) your source of healing power.

To summarize—Step 1 is acceptance of HIV-infection, then Step 2 is the belief that healing on some level is possible, and now Step 3 is making the decision to give up your old life and to devote yourself to a new healthier life.

Only then are you ready for action necessary for Step 4.

Step Four

We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

What is a searching and fearless moral inventory? Consider the following:

- A fearless moral inventory is an honest self-examination to identify your strengths and weaknesses.
- It does **not** mean focus only on your weaknesses or focus on how others perceive you.
- It **does** mean:
 - get to know yourself—your “addict” self, your “ideal self,” your “spiritual self,” your many “selves.”
 - understand the connection between your different senses of self and your addiction.

So, in Step 1 you accept that addiction causes powerlessness, in Step 2 you believe that a new life is possible, in Step 3 you decide to devote yourself to this new drug-free life, and now in Step 4 you begin to take action by conducting a thorough self-examination to determine what you may need to change in order to embark on this this new drug-free life.

Let’s see how this step can be applied to HIV.

STEP FOUR AND HIV

We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

A fearless, moral inventory is an honest self-examination

- what are your deepest fears about HIV?
- what is your ability to cope with adversity?
- what characteristics do you have, or need, to live a new healthier lifestyle?

**This does not mean focusing on your weaknesses
or focusing on how others see you.**

It allows you to:

- get to know yourself
- understand what you need to change
- understand the connection between your mind, body, and spirit.
- make positive connections with others

**Make an honest self examination
to determine what does and does not need to change
for you to embark on a healthy new lifestyle.**

- A fearless, moral inventory is an honest self-examination of:
 - your deepest fears about HIV. Unless you face your fears, you can not move forward;
 - your ability and inability to cope with adversity. As we discuss in another chapter, the coping strategies that you used in your life of addiction are unlikely to work well in your new healthier life;

- the characteristics you have, or the characteristics you lack, that are needed to live a new healthy lifestyle.
- It does not mean focus on how others perceive HIV-infected drug users.
- It does mean:
 - Get to know yourself—your attitudes and feelings about HIV and health.
 - Explore the connection between your physical body and your mind and spirit.

To summarize—in Step 1 you accepted that you are infected with HIV and can do nothing to change this fact; in Step 2 you strengthened your belief that a new healthier life is possible; in Step 3 you made the decision to devote yourself completely to a new healthier lifestyle; and in Step 4 you made an honest self-examination in order to determine what does and does not need to be changed in order to embark on this new life. This gets you ready for Step 5.

Step Five

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

What does it mean to admit our wrongs? Consider the following:

- In this step, you begin to bring other people into your journey of recovery and give voice to that private self-examination you conducted in Step 4.
- It does **not** mean:
 - You should now admit your wrong-doings to all those you wronged. Not yet anyway!
 - You should wallow in shame and guilt. This can lead quickly back to addiction.
 - You should attempt to justify your actions to this other person.
- It **does** mean:
 - You should identify the specific harms that your life of addiction has caused to:
 - You (don't forget the ways in which you have harmed yourself)
 - Other people.
 - And your higher power (have you compromised your beliefs, values, integrity, and wasted your talents?).

- Having the courage to reveal yourself with all your failings to another person—this requires trust which is essential for a drug-free lifestyle.

So, this Step tells you that self-honesty and the ability to trust another person with knowledge of your shortcomings, as well as a willingness to examine where you have fallen short of your fundamental beliefs, is essential for embarking on a drug-free lifestyle.

Let's apply this step to HIV.

STEP FIVE AND HIV

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

Be willing to disclose to another person that your past behavior contributed to HIV infection.

Admit the harm your past behavior has caused

- to you—medically, emotionally, spiritually
- to others, such as placing others at risk for HIV infection
- to your "higher power" (compromising your values and beliefs, wasting your talents)

Find the courage to trust yourself and others. Be open and honest about your vulnerabilities.

As shown on the illustration, this step could be interpreted as:

- Being willing to disclose to your partners that your past behavior resulted in HIV infection
- Be willing to identify the harm that your past behavior has caused, not only to yourself and others, but also to your relationship with your higher power.

So, in summary, in Step 1 you accepted that you cannot change your HIV seropositive status, in Step 2 you believe that your life can be healed; in Step 3 you make the decision to lead a healthier lifestyle; in Step 4 you conduct an honest self-examination of your fears about HIV, your way of coping, and your strengths and weaknesses. Now in Step 5, you are ready for self-disclosure. This Step tells you that in order to have a new healthier lifestyle, you need the courage to be open and honest with others, as well as with yourself, and you need to be willing to trust others with knowledge of your vulnerabilities.

Step Six

We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

What is meant by defects of character? Consider the following:

- Having identified what needs to be changed in previous steps, this step involves getting ready to make fundamental changes in your way of life.
- Defects of character refers to your old way of living and thinking—your “addict” self.
- You are now ready for God, your higher power (however you define your source of strength) to eliminate your “addict” self and to permit your “ideal” self to emerge.

So working this step means that you are ready to let go of your old “addict” life.

Let’s apply this step to HIV.

STEP SIX AND HIV

We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

In previous steps you admitted

- your fears about HIV
- your inability to cope
- the harm you have caused yourself and others

In step 6 you conclude that you are ready for change

- you are ready for God or your "higher power" to guide you toward a better life
- you are ready to move beyond your fears and maladaptive ways of coping
- you are ready to begin your healthier lifestyle.

You are mentally ready for change.

- In previous steps you identified your fears about HIV, your inability to cope, and the harm you have caused yourself and others.
- Now you are ready for God, your higher power, your desire for healthier lifestyle, to change your old unhealthy way of life.
- You are ready for change. You are ready to move beyond your fears and maladaptive ways of coping and to begin to live your new healthier life.

This step represents the mental process that is necessary before you can take action in the next step.

Step Seven

We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

How does this step relate to Step 6? Consider the following:

- Step 7 is the action part of Step 6.
- This is when you say goodbye to your old life and invite your new drug-free life to begin.
- It does **not** mean that your drug-free lifestyle is in someone else's hands.
- It **does** mean:
 - Learning to say no to drugs, going to new places, meeting new people, changing your attitudes, setting and resetting goals.
 - Being patient—change takes time.
 - Working hard—change takes effort.
 - Asking for help when you need it.

So, in Step 7 you make the necessary changes to your attitudes and behavior.

Let's apply this step to HIV.

STEP SEVEN AND HIV

We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

You are ready to make active changes

- make changes in your attitudes
- make changes in your behavior
- set goals
- work hard towards goals
- develop patience
- ask for help

You take action to leave behind your "old self" and begin your new healthier lifestyle.

- In the previous step you concluded you were ready for a healthier lifestyle
- Now you take action—you move beyond your fears, and begin your new healthier life
- This does **not** mean:
 - That your new healthy lifestyle is in someone else's hands

- This **does** mean that you begin to:
 - Make changes in your attitudes, beliefs, and self-perception (know that you can live a healthier life).
 - Make changes in your behavior (take your medications, manage your stress, eat and sleep well, exercise).
 - Set goals and work hard to achieve them.
 - Develop patience.
 - Ask for help when you need it.

So, Step 7 is the self-improvement step. Here you make changes to your “self”—you change the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that have kept you from achieving physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

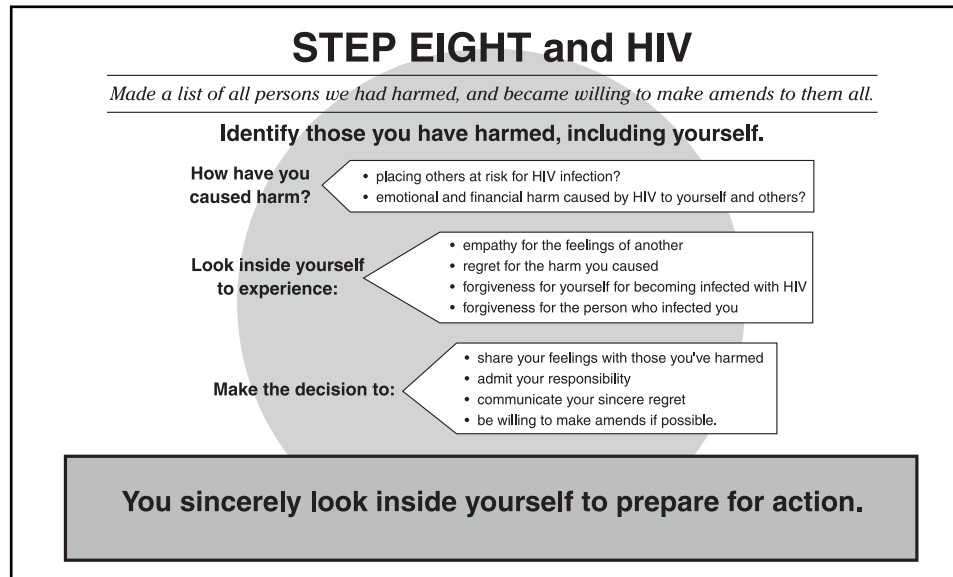
Step Eight

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Is this step an action step or a mental process? Consider the following:

- Although this step requires action in that you generate a list of those you have harmed, it is the essential mental process required for action in Step 9.
- Before you can attempt to make amends, you need to be willing to do so, and you need to identify each person you have harmed. This requires:
 - Being honest with yourself and others about the harm you have caused.
 - Having empathy for the feelings of another.
 - Having regret for the harm you caused.
 - Making the decision to disclose your feelings to someone who may not think highly of you.
- You must not proceed to the next step until you have done this. If you proceed to action without deep personal conviction, the result is insincerity; insincerity is part of your old “addict” life, and has no place in your recovery.
- Place yourself on your list of people you have harmed and be willing to forgive yourself.
- Having given up your “addict” ways in the previous step, in this step you make the decision to demonstrate your sincere regret to others about your previous “addict” behavior.

Let's apply this step to HIV.



- Through honest self-reflection, identify those you have harmed, including yourself.
- Harm includes:
 - Placing others (and self) at risk for HIV infection
 - Harms caused by HIV to yourself and your family members:
 - emotional
 - medical
 - financial
- Experience:
 - Empathy for the feelings of another.
 - Regret for the harm you caused.
 - Forgiveness.
 - For yourself for becoming infected with HIV.
 - For the person who infected you.
- Make the decision to:
 - Share your feelings with those you've harmed.
 - Admit your responsibility.
 - Communicate your sincere regret.
 - Be willing to make amends if possible.

This step is the essential mental process required for taking action in the next step.

Review

Let's review what we've covered so far. We've discussed the first 8 steps in the 12-step program of recovery. Although some of the steps seem similar upon first reading, with careful analysis you saw that each step moves you to the next step. For example, the necessary mental process always comes before the action step. You also saw that the journey of recovery includes other people in your life and attempting to make amends for your previous lifestyle. Let's review the first eight steps briefly.

- Step 1.** You accept that your unhealthy lifestyle has become unmanageable—this is a mental process.
- Step 2.** You strengthen your belief in a healing power that can change your life—this is a mental process.
- Step 3.** You make the decision to give up your old lifestyle—this is a mental process.
- Step 4.** You identify what personal changes you need to make in order to live a healthier lifestyle—this is an action step that can't be taken in the absence of the previous mental processes.
- Step 5.** You then disclose to at least one other person what you need to change about yourself—action step.
- Step 6.** You experience readiness to change your life—mental process.
- Step 7.** You begin to make personal changes—action step.
- Step 8.** You made the decision to make amends to those you harmed—this is the mental process necessary for taking action and for involving others in Step 9.

Step Nine

Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

What does it mean to make direct amends? Consider the following:

- This is an action step. Having made the decision to make amends, you now go into action and take responsibility for the harm you caused others.
- The point of this step is to acknowledge past harm (not necessarily fix it), and then let it go.
- Making amends may include compensation of some kind, and/or a sincere apology, depending upon the situation.

- This step does **not** mean:
 - you will be forgiven by those you harmed. Being sorry does not ensure forgiveness. Remember one of the things you cannot control is someone else’s response. Go into this step with no expectations about the other’s response. Even if the other person does not accept your apology, you know you are sincerely sorry, and you can now let it go and move forward with your life.
 - that people who have harmed you will attempt to make amends to you. Remember you can’t control someone else’s behavior. If others have harmed you, you need to make amends to yourself. This means being willing to honor yourself and remove yourself from relationships than cause you harm.

Let’s apply this step to HIV.

STEP NINE and HIV

Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Take responsibility for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• having infected others• having harmed your health• having hurt your family and friends	Make amends by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• acknowledging• apologizing• compensating (not necessarily financially)• forgiving yourself and others• preventing/reducing further harm
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This does not mean:

- you can fix the problem
- the other person will forgive you
- people who have harmed you will make amends, too.

Take positive action by being honest, responsible, compassionate, and forgiving.

- Have you placed others at risk for contracting HIV? Once you have taken responsibility for the specific harms caused to others by your past behavior, you can begin to make amends by acknowledging the harm you’ve caused, apologizing for the harm, and offering compensation, if appropriate. Remember that compensation does not necessarily mean financial compensation. It could be providing a service or taking some other action. Making amends also means committing yourself to prevent or reduce harm to others in the future. When working this step it is important to remember that making amends doesn’t mean you can fix the harm you have done in the past (as you know, many harms related to HIV infection cannot be reversed). Neither does it mean that the people you have harmed will be ready to forgive you. Also, don’t expect the people who

have harmed you to be ready to make amends to you. You have to go into this step with no expectations concerning the behavior or responses of others. Last, but not least, don't forget that you also need to make amends to yourself. You need to be able to forgive yourself for contracting HIV and to make amends by living a healthy lifestyle and preventing or reducing further harm to yourself.

So, in Steps 8 and 9, you take on the attributes that are essential for your new healthy lifestyle—being honest, taking responsibility, having compassion and empathy, and doing whatever you can to prevent future harm. Although you cannot reverse the harm you caused, you can reduce future harm.

Step Ten

Continued to take a personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

How does this step differ from previous steps? Consider the following:

- This step is the maintenance agreement you make with yourself.
- Initiating abstinence from drugs is extremely important, but being able to maintain a drug-free lifestyle is equally important. This takes effort.
- It is easy to fall back into old patterns, so you need to be vigilant.
- You agree to monitor your moods, feelings, thoughts, and actions. (This can be done daily in quiet time, or in a diary, or through conversations with a friend).
- You agree to acknowledge to yourself and others when you are wrong (when you have inadvertently slipped back into old “addict” ways).
- In this step, identify and acknowledge your ongoing strengths and successes as well as continuing to address your weaknesses head on.

Let's apply Step 10 to HIV.

STEP TEN and HIV

Continued to take a personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

**Leading a healthy lifestyle is an ongoing process.
Watch out for the return of old attitudes and habits.**

Monitor your emotions, attitudes, thoughts, and actions.

Watch out for:

- depression, pessimism, hopelessness
- non-adherence to medical regimens
- poor diet, lack of exercise
- drug use, high risk behavior

Acknowledge:

- when you are harming your health
- when you might be harming others

AND ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR SUCCESSES

**Make an agreement with yourself to maintain
a positive attitude and to maintain your health.**

- Step 10 is your health maintenance agreement:
 - Living a healthy lifestyle is an ongoing process.
 - Don't fall back into your old unhealthy lifestyle.
 - Be vigilant for the return of old attitudes and behavioral patterns.
- Monitor:
 - Your negative emotions, attitudes, thoughts, and actions, such as:
 - depression, pessimism, hopelessness
 - non-adherence to medical regimens
 - poor diet, lack of exercise
 - drug use and other high risk behavior (unprotected sex, needle sharing)
 - Address them quickly before they can cause harm
- Acknowledge:
 - When you may have harmed your physical, emotional, and spiritual health.
 - When you may have harmed others.
 - When you acknowledge mistakes, you reduce the risk of repeating them.
 - Acknowledge your successes. Identify what is working well in your life so that it can be strengthened even further. When you acknowledge your positive characteristics, you can strengthen them.

Step Eleven

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.

What is “God's will for you?” Consider the following:

- In Step 3, you made the decision to give up your old life of addiction and devote yourself to a new drug-free life and to your “higher power” (for example: serenity, enlightenment, balance). This is “God’s will for you.”
- Recovery from addiction is not a destination, it is a process. After you give up your old life and begin your new life, and ensure that you can maintain it, your life can continue to unfold in a positive way. This process is ongoing.
- Your life unfolds in a positive way, through prayer and/or meditation, self-reflection, and reaching out for help.
- Step 11 is about :
 - The growth of serenity, courage, and wisdom.
 - Acknowledging that you don’t always have all the answers.
 - Acknowledging that you need help and support in order to continue to grow.

Let’s apply this step to HIV.

STEP ELEVEN and HIV

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of his will and the power to carry that out.

Living well with HIV is a process, not a destination

A process means continued growth

- enhancing physical, emotional, and spiritual health
- increasing serenity, courage, wisdom
- Living each moment to the fullest

This process requires:

- focus
- self-reflection
- reaching out for guidance and support

- prayer
- support groups
- family / friends
- health care providers

Having ensured that you can maintain your new healthy lifestyle, you are ready to allow your life to unfold and soar to its highest potential.

- Living well with HIV is not a destination, it is a process.
- A process = continued growth:
 - Enhancing physical, emotional, and spiritual health.
 - Increasing serenity, courage, wisdom.
 - Living each moment to its fullest.
- This process requires:
 - Focus (e.g., prayer and meditation; we’ve talked previously about how to use relaxation and meditation techniques to improve focus)
 - Self-reflection
 - Reaching out for help, guidance, and support

To summarize the journey so far, you began by acknowledging and moving beyond your deepest fears about HIV and your maladaptive ways of coping. You then took action and began making the personal changes necessary for a new healthier lifestyle. Then you made sure that your new healthier lifestyle could be maintained. Now in this step you are ready to allow your new life to reach to its highest potential.

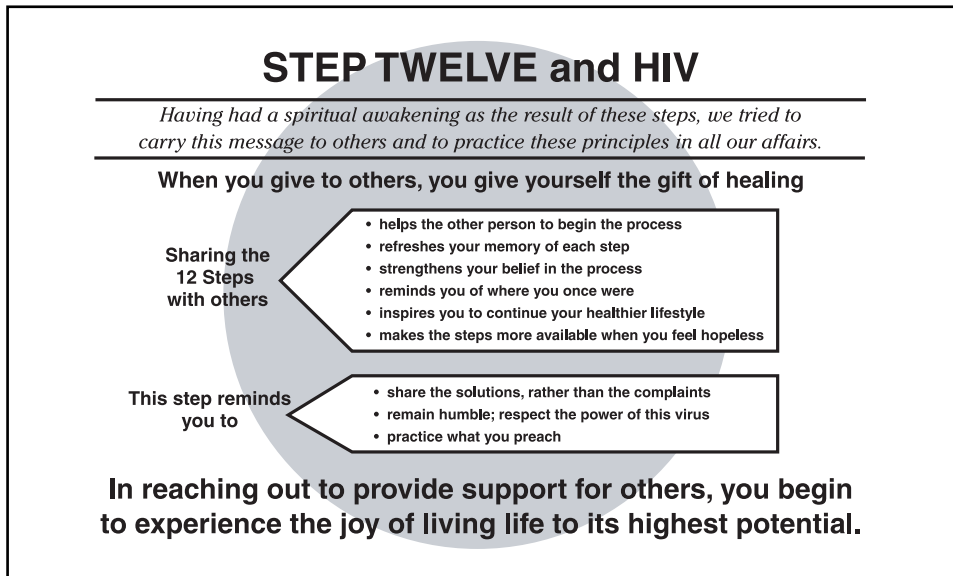
Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to produce these principles in all our affairs.

How can it help your recovery to help others? Consider the following:

- When you share with others:
 - You strengthen your own beliefs.
 - You make the steps real, more concrete.
 - You make the steps more available to you in times of high risk.
 - You receive a gift of inner peace by sharing what you know.
- This step reminds you to:
 - Share solutions, not problems. Rather than engage other drug users in what we call drug-a-logs (stories about drug use), communicate with others about what helps you to stay abstinent.
 - Remain humble—remember where you came from.
 - Practice what you preach (walk the walk, don’t just talk the talk).

Let’s apply this final step to HIV.



When you give to others, you also give to yourself. You give yourself a gift of healing. As shown in the illustration, giving to others is healing on many levels.

In previous steps you reached out for guidance. You changed your life. You demonstrated a desire to allow your life to unfold to its highest potential. Now, in reaching out to provide support to others, you begin to experience the joy of living your life to its highest potential.

Recovery from addiction and living a healthy lifestyle are not destinations, each is a process – a journey. The journey requires honest self-reflection and reaching out to others. The 12 step program can guide you on this journey. It is important to remember that the steps have different meanings for different people. Your journey may not be the same as your neighbor’s journey. This is what makes the steps so powerful. In this chapter, we have de-emphasized the religious interpretation of the steps in order to demonstrate how the steps can be interpreted in different ways. We want to emphasize that it is not important how someone else interprets the steps. It is only important how you interpret them. Find what you need in them. Everything you need for your journey is right there if you are willing to look, and if you are truly open to discovering your highest potential. You are strongly encouraged you to attend a 12-step meeting in your community.

Practice Exercise: Learning the Steps

Instructions:

1. At the end of this chapter is a Worksheet entitled “12-Step Game Blank Worksheet” on which are listed the 12 steps. The steps are not in the correct order on this worksheet.
2. Put the steps in the correct order by writing the number in the box provided. You can check your answers by referring back to the text in this chapter.
3. Plan to attend a 12-step meeting in your community during the coming week (enter the date, time, and location in the schedules section of your Workbook).

Quiz

1. In the Serenity Prayer you ask for:

- a. serenity to accept the things you cannot change
- b. courage to change the things you can
- c. wisdom to know the difference
- d. all of the above

2. Step 1 of the Twelve Steps says that you are powerless over your addiction; this means:

- a. you cannot change your life
- b. the drug is in control; you cannot change the effect of drugs
- c. you should leave your recovery in your sponsor’s hands
- d. you cannot change your dealer’s behavior

3. You need to be religious to benefit from the 12-Steps:

- a. True
- b. False

4. A person’s “higher power” is:

- a. God
- b. nature, loving energy, life force
- c. an inner source of strength and healing
- d. any of the above

5. Steps 8 and 9 refer to making amends to those you have harmed.

Making amends includes:

- a. forgiving yourself for any pain you caused yourself or others
- b. being honest with yourself and others about the harm you caused
- c. acknowledging past harm, not necessarily fixing it, and then letting it go
- d. all of the above

Practice Exercise: Stress Management/Relaxation

We recommend that you conclude each chapter by doing a 10-minute relaxation exercise. Use this time to practice meditation, deep breathing, or visualization. Dim the lights, get comfortable in your chair, uncross your legs, and sit quietly with your eyes closed. Remember that learning to relax is a skill that takes practice, so if you feel restless at first, just remind yourself that this is a ten-minute gift of quiet time that you give to yourself. With practice, you can use meditation and relaxation in many areas of your life including helping you to “work the steps.” So use this time now to practice becoming centered, relaxed, and focused on whatever step you have reached so far.

12-Step Game Blank Worksheet

Instructions: In each of the larger boxes above is one of the Twelve Steps. In the smaller box, write the number (1 through 12) that corresponds to correct order of the Steps.

<p>Continued to take a personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.</p> <input type="text"/>	<p>Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.</p> <input type="text"/>	<p>We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.</p> <input type="text"/>
<p>Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.</p> <input type="text"/>	<p>We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.</p> <input type="text"/>	<p>We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.</p> <input type="text"/>
<p>We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.</p> <input type="text"/>	<p>We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.</p> <input type="text"/>	<p>We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.</p> <input type="text"/>
<p>Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.</p> <input type="text"/>	<p>We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.</p> <input type="text"/>	<p>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.</p> <input type="text"/>

