

Step 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

Steps 10 and 11 focus on breaking the most basic pattern of our addiction – that of sliding back to using only our own ideas to determine right and wrong.

Like Step two, this step uses religious language when it is not about religion.

To understand this step, we start with the phrase “conscious contact with God, as we understand God”. In recovery, we recognize that our higher power is far greater than our understanding of that higher power. We are constantly learning more about that higher power and what that higher power wants for our lives. As we learn about our higher power, we find ourselves becoming more and more aware of the reality around us. Both “prayer” and “meditation” are activities that can connect us with reality.

Step 11 asks us to recognize that we are addicts. Our minds will continue to operate in addictive ways even though we have gone through the other steps. We will still have periods of insanity.

Prayer is clear, honest talking to our higher power about our yearnings, wants, and needs. Often, we start from a point of insanity and we work to get clear and honest. Prayer includes any activity that helps us to gain clarity into reality and what is happening, ourselves, our wants, and our true needs so that we can communicate them to our Higher Power. This includes many activities besides just talking. Part of prayer is that process of opening up where we are - emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Speaking what is happening to us - both within our minds and outside our bodies is a prayer. Thus, speaking honestly at meetings is a form of prayer.

In the process of prayer, we learn about reality. That means that prayer is also a learning process and the different ways that people learn will govern what activities will be best for them to use in prayer. There are many different activities that can be used as prayer.

Western culture has prayer as a quiet, still activity. Other cultures recognize that other activities can be used to help clear our minds and help us get clarity as to ourselves, our wants, and our needs. Some people need quiet; some need physical activity; and some need visual or verbal activity.

Examples of prayerful activities have included walking or other physical activity including martial arts. Other people use artistic endeavors. Other people use music. Whatever methods we use, it is important that we have a way to express the deepest parts of our being.

Meditation is honest listening to our Higher Power so that we can act in accordance with that Higher Power's will. Meditation is the process where we let go of what we believe the world to be so that we can be open to learning what the world really is. In brain scans of those who are meditating, the part of the brain that imposes order on our perceptions shuts down. That is a real benefit. Because we are addicts, our beliefs about reality are wrong. They do not match reality. We have wrong beliefs about what is happening inside of us and in the world around us and what the world is like. By shutting down those beliefs and being open to what is around us, we may hear and perceive what reality truly is. Thus, we become more able to act in accordance with how the world really is.

Meditation is about accepting from outside ourselves a new view of what the world is. When we shut down our own comprehensions and mental filters, we may be open to finally hearing something that we would not have wanted to accept as true. For many people, that happens as we listen to honest sharing in meetings.

As we are gaining new perspectives on life, part of what we gain is a reconnection with the sense of Awe. This is not something that can be scheduled or planned but happens as we are more aware of a higher power's actions.

We often expect prayer and meditation to have specific results. Religious people often are asking for and looking for specific actions to happen in their prayers. Most often, we are disappointed. This is normal. When

we are asking for specific actions to occur, we often go back into the old ways of imposing our views and expectations onto the world.

In this step, we bring our needs, wants, and hopes to a higher power and ask not for specific results. Instead, we ask what a higher power wants us to do about them.

Reality is always different from our expectations. Even when praying or meditating, we may have expectations that we will get specific benefits from it. However, repeatedly those expectations have not been met. Those who pray and meditate report that they get benefits, but not right away, not when we expected them, and not in ways that we expected. By praying and meditating, we are opening ourselves up to noticing when the benefits come.

Thus, the process of prayer and meditation helps us to be grounded in reality.

In this step, we ask only for the power to carry out what our higher power wants for us. Often, the power that we get from this step is mental, emotional, and spiritual instead of physical. Instead of being granted power to change the situation, we are given power to change us so that we can see new ways of dealing with the situation.

In this step, we are urged to pray only for knowledge of our higher power's will for us and the power to carry that out. So, how can we tell what our higher power's will is? Some tests to see if something is in our higher power's will are: a) Is it within my capabilities? b) Can I take action right now? In our experience, our higher power does not usually give us directions far in advance of the needed decision. c) Can I tell others that I plan to do this or have done this? d) Is the action in accordance with our values? e) Even if the proposed action is difficult, am I at peace with it?

As with all the steps, Step Eleven is far more than a simple religious action. We are asked to open ourselves up far more than we have in the past and to be open to new paths our higher power wants us to take.

The Twelve Steps

One: We admitted we were powerless over our addictive sexual behavior - that our lives have become unmanageable.

Two: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Three: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.

Four: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

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

Six: Were entirely ready for God to remove all these defects of character.

Seven: Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

Eight: Made a list of all the persons we have harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

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

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

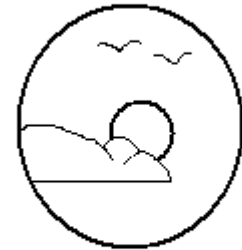
Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

Twelve: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.

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Reality Check

A practical guide to working step 11



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