

Step Eleven - "Improving Our Conscious Contact"

Your Sponsor's Companion Packet

1 Sponsor's Warm Welcome

You've done an awesome job. You've cleared the wreckage of the past and built a solid, daily practice of self-examination. The first ten steps were the "heavy lifting" to clear the channel. Step Eleven is the *reward*. It is the practice of *using* that clear channel.

This is the path to soul discovery. If the previous steps were about getting *free from* the past, this step is about *plugging into* the present. It's how we "improve our conscious contact" with the Higher Power we came to believe in. This is not a chore; it is the source of the guidance, power, and serenity we need for a life of "happy, joyous, and free" service.

2 Core Concept - Seeking Conscious Contact

"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 it out."

The Big Book (4th ed.) lays out this practice as a simple, powerful daily routine.

Section	Pages	Core Insight
"Into Action" (Primary)	pp. 85-88	This is the <i>entire, detailed instruction</i> for Step Eleven. It gives us a precise plan for "when we retire" and "on awakening."
12x12 - Step Eleven Essay	pp. 96-105	A beautiful, "mind-blowing" exploration of what prayer and meditation are, what they are <i>not</i> , and what it means to seek God's will.

3 The Daily Practice (from The Big Book, pp. 85-88)

The Big Book gives us a clear, two-part plan for daily practice.

Action	How to Do It	When to Do It
1. The "Nightly Review"	We review our day (as we learned in Step Ten). We look for where we were selfish, dishonest, resentful, or afraid. We ask God for forgiveness and ask what we should have done instead. This <i>clears the slate</i> for the morning.	"When we retire at night..."
2. The "Morning Practice"	"On awakening..." We think about the 24 hours ahead. We ask God to direct our thinking. We pray <i>only</i> for "knowledge of His will... and the power to carry it out." After, we "relax and take it easy," listening for guidance. This is our <i>meditation</i> .	"On awakening..."

How to Pray (Asking)

Prayer is our side of the conversation. It's how we *talk* to our Higher Power. The step gives us the exact script: we pray *only* for **knowledge of His will for us** and **the power to carry that out**.

A Simple Framework for Morning Prayer:

1. **Gratitude:** "Thank you for my sobriety and for this day."
2. **Request (The Step 11 Prayer):** "Please show me Your will for me today, and give me the power to carry it out."
3. **Surrender:** "Please guide my thinking and remove my fear, dishonesty, and self-seeking motives."

How to Meditate (Listening)

Meditation is *their* side of the conversation. It's how we *listen* for the answer. It is the practice of quieting our own "self-will" so we can hear the "quiet, inner voice" of our Higher Power.

A Basic 5-Minute "Quiet-Heart" Meditation (for after your prayer):

Step	Action	Duration
1. Settle	Sit comfortably, close your eyes.	30 sec
2. Breathe	Inhale for 4 counts, exhale for 4 counts. Focus only on the breath.	1 min
3. Center	Bring to mind a single word that represents your Higher Power ("God," "Peace," "Love," "Stillness").	1 min
4. Listen	Let the word go. Sit in the silence. When thoughts come (and they will), don't fight them. Just label them "thinking" and gently return to the silence. This is the <i>practice</i> .	2 min
5. Close	Gently bring your awareness back to the room. Take one deep breath and open your eyes.	30 sec

4 Tradition Eleven - "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films."

This is the spiritual secret of Step Eleven. We pray and meditate *not* to "promote" our piety. We don't get a "certificate of enlightenment" to hang on the wall.

We practice Step Eleven to become forces of "attraction." A person who is in "conscious contact" with their Higher Power *changes*. They become calmer, more thoughtful, less reactive, and more serene. They have a peace that others can feel.

This *serenity* is what "attracts" the still-suffering alcoholic to the program. We become a walking, breathing example of the promises. Step Eleven is how we maintain our spiritual "anonymity"—letting our *actions* and our *serenity* (borne of God's will) do the talking, not our

ego (borne of self-will).

5 Deep-Level Barriers & How to Work Through Them

Barrier	Root Cause	Advanced Strategy
"My mind <i>never</i> stops!"	Habitual rumination, anxiety. This is the #1 complaint.	Label-and-Release: This is the <i>goal</i> , not a failure. When a thought intrudes, silently say "thinking" and gently, <i>without judgment</i> , return to your breath. You may do this 100 times in 5 minutes. <i>That is a 100% successful meditation.</i>
"Prayer feels mechanical or silly."	Lack of emotional connection.	Emotion-Infused Prayer: Before speaking, pause. Feel <i>one specific</i> gratitude (e.g., the warmth of the sun, the taste of coffee). Let <i>that feeling</i> be the prayer, and let the words just ride on it.
"Meditation makes me feel empty or anxious."	Misinterpreting "silence" as "absence."	Guided Imagery: Visualize a safe, peaceful place. Invite your Higher Power to simply sit there <i>with</i> you. You don't have to "hear" anything. The goal is just to be <i>in the presence</i> of that power.
"I don't have time."	Self-will disguised as "busyness."	Micro-Meditations: Start with <i>one minute</i> in the morning. Do 30-second "breath checks" during your Step Ten inventory. A consistent one minute is better than an inconsistent 20 minutes.

6 Reflection & Integration (Your Personal Worksheet)

- **Morning Practice:** For one week, did you set aside time for prayer and meditation? [] Yes [] No
- **Nightly Review:** For one week, did you review your day with your Higher Power? [] Yes [] No
- **Journal Prompt:** During your "listening" time, what "guidance" did you receive? (Note: Guidance often feels less like a "voice" and more like a simple, next-right-thought, a gut feeling, or a new sense of calm.)
- **"Attraction vs. Promotion":** Where did you "promote" your will this week? Where could you have practiced "attraction" (quiet serenity, a helpful action) instead?

7 Suggested Follow-Up Reading

Source	Pages / Sections	What to Highlight
Big Book - "Into Action" (Primary)	pp. 85-88	The entire, specific plan for "when we retire" and "on awakening." This is your new daily blueprint.
12x12 - Step Eleven Essay	pp. 96-105	The "mind-blowing" parts. The discussion of "meditation... in a world of clashing material aims."
12x12 - Tradition Eleven Essay	pp. 186-192	The deep spiritual meaning of "attraction rather than promotion."

8 Moving Toward Step Twelve

Step Ten keeps us clean. Step Eleven gives us our *direction*. It provides the "knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out."

This leads directly, perfectly, and powerfully into Step Twelve: **"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps..."**

Step Eleven *is* the awakening, in daily practice. And this awakening creates an overflowing desire to **"...carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."** Step Eleven is the "power-up" that gives us the message to carry and the principles to practice.

9 Quick-Help FAQ

Question	Answer
What if I feel nothing during meditation?	That is 100% normal. You are practicing. The goal is not to feel "bliss," the goal is to <i>sit</i> . The <i>results</i> of meditation (calm, less reactivity) are felt later in your day, not during the session.
Can I use a meditation app?	Absolutely. Use any tool that helps you sit quietly and focus.
What if I get "bad" ideas during meditation?	The Big Book says we check our "thoughts or ideas" with our sponsor and the principles. If an idea is selfish, dishonest, or harmful, it's not "guidance"—it's just a thought. We let it go.
How long should I meditate?	Start with 5 minutes. Consistency is <i>far</i> more important than duration. A consistent 5 minutes every day is better than 1 hour once a month.

10 Final Encouragement

This step is the path from a "design for living that works" to a "design for living that *sings*." You are fostering a direct, personal, and profound connection to the force that has saved your life.

This practice will change you from the inside out. It will give you an inner resource of peace and direction that no person or outside circumstance can take away. This is the ultimate "soul discovery," and it is the heart of the life you are building.

-Your Sponsor