

STEP 11

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

It should feel good to be into the maintenance steps. Step Eleven asks us to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him. Steps Two and Three made us aware that human resources were not enough even though when most entered Gamblers Anonymous they felt such human help would be sufficient. Eventually we came to realize that our addiction meant we must use all possible help. Now we must learn better how to communicate with our Higher Power. How can we get the most help available? How can we combine Higher Power help with human help? We will need both.

Back in the gambling days such communication was virtually impossible. Then most felt unworthy, ashamed and cut off from this visual contact. We sought help but offered nothing of ourselves. When one feels cut off, one doesn't make any effort to communicate with one's Higher Power.

As one approaches Step Eleven two points seem important. One, is whether this step helps control ego? Does one need the step? Talking with other members, you will be told that you need all the help that you can get. Also you will be told that some problems which may be your lot cannot be solved by human resources alone. The help is available so decide to use it. Whatever it takes, do it to avoid a return to gambling or the personality of the compulsive gambler.

The second point to be considered is ego. Those that have been in the program a while see how capable of change ego is. For extreme unworthiness, ego can expand to a very large unhealthy size in seconds. When ego swells the mind closes to new ideas, particularly those that are not one's own. Then one's Higher Power becomes unnecessary. "We can do it ourselves".

It's time we scrapped this way of thinking and replaced it with one which accepts a Higher Power as the boss and which, therefore, will not swell to an unworkable size. As you grow in the Gamblers Anonymous Program, ego will become more healthy as you learn. Old ego, the source of much stress, discomfort, impatience and anxiety will be replaced by a peace loving serene ego.

A conscious contact seems to start with daily prayer. What is prayer? To some it is a personal chat with their Higher Power. So each of us can pray as we see fit. Realizing your weakness you will seek the will of your Higher Power and the strength to carry it out. Seek your Higher Power's will as you are blind to the master plan. Daily, thank your Higher Power for mercy in showing you His will.

At first prayer is difficult and you can "fake it until you make it". In time you will grow to eagerly accept prayer and know the rewards it will give you. As you try to cope with the new problems life offers each day, prayer enlarges the ability to cope.

Meditation is prayer at an even deeper stage of spiritual development. If one prays the serenity prayer, effort at concentration is on the entire prayer. If you were to meditate you would concentrate on one word or one small group of words. Serenity, courage or wisdom would be a good place to start. A word examination like this makes the prayer more meaningful and makes you more aware of your place in the human order. This is a bare beginning in meditation and will help you to develop this meaningful practice.

The bottom line seems to be a more complete recognition of yourself in relation to God and human beings. Your success is now His and your failures, accept as your own. Seek to learn from the failure.

God will give you the strength to carry out His will if you seek His will and His strength.

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Step Eleven outlines the promise that prayer and meditation are the means to conscious contact with our Higher Power, but ...

1. Some members feel that this contact is unnecessary.
2. Many cling to "G.A. is my Higher Power" and contact is always available.

DISCUSS:

- A. Miracles of recovery witnessed in G.A.
- B. Is recovery accomplished alone or with the help of others? How have others in the program contributed to our personal recovery?

Those who experiment with prayer and meditation find unexpected results.

1. Closed-minded members will not try.
2. Prayers to resolve specific problems are a demand to have God conform to our will. Continued exploration of prayer and meditation is suggested.

DISCUSS:

- A. How has open-mindedness and concern for others improved?
- B. Have we become interested in improving our spiritual values?
- C. Can we become the "old dog" learning new tricks?

Examination of any prayer will be helpful.

1. Read slowly.
2. Self forgetting is the goal of all prayer.
3. Debate and comments do not apply to experimentation and efforts at prayer. Here ... we are on our own!

DISCUSS:

- A. "It is better to give than to receive." Why?
- B. When did you receive your last compliment? About what? Was it deserved?

Imagination is the food of sound achievement. Meditation and prayer are the food of our soul's growth.

1. We find spiritual objectives through prayer.
2. A conscious contact with God to know His will for us offers true freedom.

DISCUSS:

- A. Our new values of truth and honesty - are they paying off?
 - B. Our greatest source of personal satisfaction these days. Peace of mind? Freedom? How did it happen? When? Why?
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