

STEP TEN INVENTORY

In *Recipe for Recovery: A Guide to the Twelve Steps of Chronic Pain Anonymous* we read, “In Step Ten, we maintain our spiritual fitness by staying focused on the Steps and deepening our application of them over time.” (p. 92) How do we do this? One tool is to do a careful review and reflection each night. We identify the areas where we were successful at applying our spiritual program and those areas which need corrective measures.

The book goes on to state, “Spiritual growth requires us to be honest about what we do and who we are.” (p.94) As part of our CPA recovery we set our intentions for the day in the morning and at the end of the day, we see how we did applying our program. We may adjust the timing for these actions based on our capacity. We can also do “spot checks” any time during the day to determine if we are in alignment with our spiritual aims.

In *Stories of Hope: Living in Serenity with Chronic Pain and Chronic Illness*, we are reminded that Step Ten “makes it possible for me to accept myself as a human being and remember that when I do err, I can repair the situation.” (p. 71) Step Ten is a maintenance Step, continuing the process started in Step Four. We are human and we make mistakes. Recovery is a lifetime practice. The slogan, *Progress Not Perfection*, reminds us we are always learning how to incorporate the Steps into our daily lives. Over time we begin to forgive ourselves and love ourselves unconditionally. Soon we discover we offer forgiveness and love to others.

Step Ten supports our conscious decision to turn our attention toward our program. Practicing this Step nightly focuses our awareness throughout each day. It helps us deepen our emotional and spiritual recovery resulting in a gradual process of inner transformation. As we continue to ask our Higher Power to remove our resentments, fears, selfishness and unhealthy behaviors, over time we find we experience more serenity and happiness.

Getting Started

The following inventory guide helps to bring clarity in the ongoing process of course correction. Like any tool in our program, this is merely a suggested method for Step Ten. It can be done in writing, as part of a meditation, or shared with a trusted friend. A Tenth Step partner to share our inventory with is one way to be accountable and gives us the opportunity to connect with a program friend. We keep in mind we use this tool with kindness toward ourselves.

Most importantly find a way that works best for you to make Step Ten a daily practice. It can be a quick and easy review, or you can set aside time for an in-depth assessment.

When using this tool, not every item will apply each day, we are free to choose questions to fit our changing circumstances. We may use portions of this tool on some days and utilize it more fully on other days. The questions are prompts, and with our Higher Power’s guidance, we will know where we need to focus and can leave the rest.

The questions begin with whether we started our day in contact with our Higher Power, and how we set our intentions for the day. As we go through our day, we notice our behaviors, thoughts, strengths, and areas that need improvement. We examine self-care, including activity, diet and rest. We look at whether we did or did not use our program tools. We identify what we might want to change tomorrow. We close our inventory with gratitude as we prepare for restorative sleep, knowing nothing remains to be done in this moment, and we can rest in the care of our Higher Power.

One final word before beginning: we may want to start or end our session with prayer and meditation. We can write our own prayer or use one we find inspiring.

As I began this day:

Did I start the day with prayer and other spiritual practices, such as meditation or readings, to put me in a sound frame of mind for the day ahead?
Did I start the day with conscious contact with a Higher Power as I understand this?
Was I able to put my trust and faith in my Higher Power?
Did I seek my Higher Power's will, keeping in mind, "Thy will, not mine, be done"?

During this day in my thoughts and actions:

Was I resentful, demanding or ungracious?
Was I unselfish and considerate of others?
Did I try to see things from another's point of view?
Was I critical of myself or others today?
Did I resist the temptation to gossip?
Did I act with patience, compassion, kindness and love toward others?
How did I offer patience, compassion, kindness and love to myself?
Was I honest?
Was I hungry, exhausted, lonely and in pain? (HELP)
Did I exercise or do appropriate physical activity today?
Was I able to nourish my body well?
Did I rest and pace myself today?
What other self-care did I engage in?
Did I feel self-pity or like a victim?
Did I say yes when I wanted to say no?
When I experienced pain or physical symptoms, what program tools did I use?
Did I experience intense emotion, such as fear or anger?
Did I try to control and have things my way?
Did I try to force a solution?
Did I focus on the solution and not the problem?
Did I project negatively into the future?
Was there joy in my life today?
What positive traits did I exhibit today?

Did I reach out to my sponsor or a program friend today?
Did I do something difficult today and deal with it maturely?
Did I renew my conscious contact with my Higher Power during the day?
How was I of service today?
Did I harm anyone today?
What amends are needed?
What have I put off and not dealt with today?

During this day when I think about my Step Four patterns:

Was I aware of my character traits?
Did I notice if any of my character traits created problems?
Did I experience intense feelings? What brought them about?
Did I become obsessed or fixated?
Did any familiar patterns appear? Which ones?
Did I pause today and ask my Higher Power's will?
Did I blame anyone else for my behaviors or feelings?
Do I need to admit I was wrong?
Do I owe anyone an amends?
Which Steps did I consciously work today?
Is there anything I need to discuss with my sponsor or someone else?
Did I feel unique and separate, or did I feel a part of humanity?
Did I pray for the well-being of another?
Was I able to accept myself as I am for this day only?

Inner reflections:

Are there things that didn't go as well as I wished?
Is there anything I need to do right now to improve the situation?
What can I do tomorrow?
Have I asked my Higher Power for guidance?

With an attitude of gratitude:

In what ways was I grateful for my blessings during the day?
At this moment, what am I grateful for?

As I close the day:

Who needs my prayers?
Am I in contact with my Higher Power?
Am I ready to go to sleep with a clear conscience?