

STEP TEN INVENTORY

Recipe for Recovery: A Guide to the Twelve Steps of Chronic Pain Anonymous says, "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 way is to do a careful review and reflection each night in which we identify the areas where we succeeded in applying our spiritual program and those areas that need corrective measures.

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

Stories of Hope: Living in Serenity with Chronic Pain and Chronic Illness reminds us 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." Step Ten is a maintenance Step that continues 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 that we are always learning how to incorporate the Steps into our daily lives. Over time, we begin to forgive ourselves and love ourselves unconditionally, and then discover we are able to 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, dishonesty, and

unhealthy behaviors, over time we find we experience greater serenity and happiness.

Getting Started

The following inventory guide helps bring clarity to 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. Having a Tenth Step partner to share our inventory is one way to be accountable, and it gives us the opportunity to connect with a program friend. Keep in mind that 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.

Not every item of this tool 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.

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 used 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 that nothing remains to be done in this moment and that 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 Higher Power?

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?

In moments of pain, was I a pain to others?

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?

Did I reach out to my sponsor or a program friend?

Did I do something difficult today and deal with it maturely?

Did I renew my conscious contact with my Higher Power?

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 for 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 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:

Were there things that didn't go as well as I'd 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?