

## **Spiritual Emergence Anonymous 12-Step Manual**

*This is a work in progress: It is compiled of notes taken by SEA participants over the past years, and will continue to be added to and edited. We seek contributions by SEA members to refine and extend this manual.*

### **Step 1**

**We admitted we were powerless over the effects of spiritual emergence --that our lives had become unmanageable**

Step one is necessary before any of the other steps can be worked. We must come to terms with our own personal limitations to fix our situation. Spiritual emergence can be a particularly difficult situation in this respect, because it can bring simultaneously immense benefits as well as immense challenges. Only when we realize the challenges are too great for us to “take control of our situation” can we admit our own powerlessness, regardless of how much power has come to us through the spiritual emergence. We may sense an increase in our power to influence others, to manifest what we want, to expand our state of consciousness, to share experiences with mystics and spiritual teachers, to understand profound mysteries, to experience bliss, love, and ecstasy. But despite these benefits, if our lives have become unmanageable, we suffer greatly.

We may find our health deteriorating or find ourselves ungrounded and unable to find peace or to move forward in an effective manner. We may find ourselves making enemies and creating animosity despite identifying with pure love. We may find ourselves becoming highly sensitive to others’ feelings, to violence, to toxic air and food, or to electromagnetic fields, scents, light, or sound. We may find ourselves unable to be satisfied on the earthly realm, always seeking ways to “escape” to heavenly or spiritual realms. We may find we no longer recognize ourselves, become disinterested in our work, or want to avoid hanging out with our friends. This may involve sudden disinterest in money, stability, caring for our bodies, planning the future, or staying involved in society. Despite good intentions, new passion toward spiritual directions, and loving hearts, we may find that no matter how hard we try, we cannot fit comfortably into a steady, satisfying, stable, and productive identity and lifestyle.

We have found it is valuable to admit the limits of our personal power and acknowledge that we are powerless over our own spiritual emergence—that this is a bigger process than our single, individual selves.

The process of surrender for us is not about being captured and forced into submission, which is almost how the AA first step appears to newcomers. Instead we make the choice to lay down our willful egoistic attempts to control, making the choice to accept the help we need, and make the choice to take a more receptive role in this process. It is like actively developing the art of being instead of doing. Active rest. Active surrender.

### **Step 2**

## **Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

When we come to accept that there is a Power greater than ourselves, whether we call it our Higher Power, our Creator, God, The Universe, Goddess, Buddha, Allah, Yahweh, etc., then we can trust and have faith that this Power has our best interest at heart and wants only good for us. Surrender to this can offer such relief! When we are ready and able to give up control, insanity, worry, rumination, fear, madness, dread and hopelessness, then we open ourselves to be comforted and healed, with the possibility of being restored to wholeness in body, mind, and soul. We practice coming to a place where we can trust and let the divine power take the wheel. We begin to sense that we were only pretending that we knew the way, and put our focus less on our own meager strength and more upon the divine guide of our journey. Gradually we learn to let go and shift into glide. The feeling can be very natural, like aligning ourselves to gravity—only in a spiritual sense, rather than the physical sense of the electromagnetic pull of the earth.

When we connect with our Higher Power, we become more aligned and guided back to center. We more clearly see synchronicities and people coming into our lives when needed, confirming we are on the spiritual path that is our birthright. We experience the comfort of being “in the flow.” In contrast, when our inner compass is off course, we lose our sanity. Without that inner compass, we are set back into spinning and striving for control of that which is not ours to control. Regaining our compass allows us to slow down and enjoy the Journey, substituting self-care for self-sacrifice.

Our natural inclination in spiritual emergence is to serve others, and through centering and submitting to divine guidance, we learn to serve without expectation of anything in return. We are only shepherds, assisting others who are also asking for guidance. As we share our experience of surrender, our madness can be put to rest.

## **Step 3**

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

Step three refers to a process of surrender to a force greater than ourselves. This greater force may be conceptualized as ‘God’ in whatever manner we understand the concept. ‘God’ may refer to ‘Higher Power’, ‘divine oneness’, ‘source’, ‘life force’, ‘Gaia’, whatever helps us to conceptualize a force of greater good and knowledge than ourselves. This force may be within us but extends beyond our human mind. It is ecumenical, all-knowing, and the source of Love.

This step involves an active decision to surrender as we come to understand that our lives have become unmanageable in their current state. It may involve a conscious decision to follow a different path. Surrender may be necessary to break old patterns. Surrender leads us to directly face our own need to control. Often when we feel challenged, old patterns of behavior and deeply held feelings of fear emerge. Learning to surrender spiritually may facilitate the ability to surrender emotionally and physically and vice versa.

In this step, we are placing our trust in this greater force, to help guide us towards the right path, having acknowledged that we cannot do this alone. Our motivation may be out of fear and

desperation or we may be motivated by the joy of healing. Some days it may seem easier or more difficult to surrender. Often it is a painful process and requires hard work. This step requires faith and trust as it involves facing our fears, and drawing upon courage to overcome those fears.

It can be helpful to have a support network to remind us we are on the right path. Some days may feel chaotic, even impossible, with more to do than what we have time or capacity for. A process of spiritual emergence might involve a large shift in mindset in a very short timeframe. Some days it may actually feel helpful to surrender, particularly when we are feeling that we just don't know how to move forward. The act of surrendering forces us to tune into our heart and to try and put aside the chaos of our mind. This step helps us to conceptualize God *as we understand God*, as a process itself. The key concept here is trust. We learn to trust in a process that we cannot, and need not, try to control--a process that unfolds naturally for our greater good.

## **Step 4**

### **Made a searching and fearless inventory of ourselves.**

We begin to look closely at who we are and how we behave—both the parts we are uncomfortable with and the parts that we need to appreciate about ourselves. Some of the work in Step 4 can be uncomfortable and dark, and at other times, freeing and affirming. It involves mindfully reliving memories and emotions. Some of us come to this step agnostic and bitter after years of defending our own ego. We need to draw on the support of the groups and our sponsors, and put our trust in the higher power of the God of our understanding to lead us to reconsider our lives.

In this step we take a “searching and fearless” look at ourselves and our past starting with situations, people, institutions or principles that we hold resentments towards. We have found that in looking at our difficult times and who we resent we can better see what occurred. Sometimes when we felt we had been betrayed by others we were in fact holding expectations or assumptions of others that they could not live up to. Or we may have blamed others for things that happened to us that no one was in control of. Of particular importance are situations where we might have blamed ourselves, resented ourselves, or punished ourselves. Step four gives us the opportunity to realize that we are only human and make mistakes. We know we can learn from these mistakes if we are honest and take the time to find clarity about what happened.

They say “it is the secrets that kill us” and it is in this inventory of ourselves that we really dig into what secrets we have been keeping from ourselves and others out of fear of judgment. Many of us have witnessed a lot of judgement in our lives and have reasons to be fearful. We learned in youth how to adapt and survive, how to please, and how to manipulate, and some of these strategies are no longer serving us.

For those of us in spiritual emergence, there may have been stigma and judgment around mental health issues and behaviors that resulted from non-ordinary states of consciousness. We are grateful to have this space in working our 12 Steps to explore and feel safe in re-examining those times. On the other hand, we may have considered ourselves superior to others based on our spiritual emergence. Step 4 is a time to carefully examine these kind of comparisons. We may

find we are our own biggest critic and harshest judge. We may find it was betrayal of ourselves that has been our greatest difficulty. This process demands self-compassion.

Step 4 helps us to recognize with more clarity times in our lives we regret. This opens up a choice by continuing with the 12 Steps to not to dwell on them with self-criticism nor to lay blame and seek revenge. Rather, we take the time to find exactly what went wrong, what about us we can ask to be changed, and where proper amends could be made.

Having gone through our resentments we may find many of them involve people or institutions that were demanding more from us than we could manage with the resources we had. Some of our greatest embarrassments may have come from things done when we were in these distressed non-ordinary states. Perhaps these people or institutions were operating with a worldview or value system that clashed with our own and pushed us from a healthier spiritual emergence process into a reckless spiritual emergency. We may also have felt betrayed by those people and institutions who we turned to for help but were unable to provide us with the answers or safety we were searching for.

In Step 4 we also take a fearless inquiry of our strengths, gifts, talents, and skills. These assets are important parts of who we are. In uncovering them, we may find that it takes effort to recognize them, to acknowledge them, and then to appreciate and trust them. Because they are part of us, the path to becoming whole involves embracing the good parts of ourselves, being mindful not to diminish ourselves.

We also inquire into the parts of ourselves that tend to diminish or support our strengths. Do we discount and ignore or do we celebrate and develop the good qualities within ourselves? Do we take care of our bodies? Do we honor our emotional selves? Do we give ourselves safe places, allow ourselves to rest, and nourish ourselves with good food for our bellies and good thoughts for our minds? All these parts come to the surface in our fearless inventory.

## **Step 5**

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

Step 5 is really three separate steps. It is up to us to choose which of these conversations we have, in what order, and in what location. We know ourselves the best, so we choose. It may be easiest to start with admitting to ourselves, or to God, or we may need to start by admitting to someone we trust to carry us through this difficult step.

Because our inventory has already been written, our job in this step is to set up these three meetings in environments that support the purpose. They best be private, un-interrupted, with plenty of time so that the conversations are allowed to run their course, rather than being cut short. We can listen for responses as we go, and allow the conversation of admitting to broaden into a greater conversation of response, acknowledgment, and creative investigation if we are comfortable doing so.

When we choose someone to admit to, it is wise to choose someone who can listen with unconditional acceptance. Best to find someone who can withhold reacting in judgmental ways, and restrain from giving advice. Their job is only to listen, and to love unconditionally. Our job is to explain this clearly to them before we go through our list of admitting our shortcomings.

It also helps to remember that we humans are often more tolerant and forgiving and tolerant of a friend's behaviors than we are of our own. Step 5 helps us to practice trusting other people, and we need others to help us find insight. This can be particularly helpful if we have felt betrayed in the past. Sharing with another keeps us honest, and helps us to accept both our shadow side, as well as our brilliant inner light.

Great healing can come from each of these three conversations, with ourselves, with God, and with another human being. We may be surprised at the power of sharing what we have for so long suppressed from ourselves or from telling another person. We find that this helps to erase our shame and also more fully embrace our gifts. We may learn that we are not the only ones with these types of secrets. When we allow someone else to hear our stories and not reject or punish us for them, self-acceptance may ensue, and freedom to be more whole can come simply from expressing these tightly-held secrets.

## Step 6

**Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**

*Defects of character* is a phrase that we respond to in different ways. On one extreme, we never want to feel that we have any defects of character—maybe we make mistakes, or we haven't learned something yet, or we temporarily ignored our conscience, or were victims of difficult circumstances, but *defect of character* suggests that it is a part of ourselves that we have no control over, whether we know about it or not. It doesn't seem fair if we are willing to be perfect, that we should be blemished with a character we cannot change that prevents us from being perfect. For example, we do not want to hurt others. We do not like to think that we have a *defect of character* that might make us hurt others without realizing it, or despite all our best efforts. "If I do my best, that should be good enough."

On the other extreme, we can also blame anything on our own *defect of character*, using it as a shield to protect us from responsibility. If our *defect of character* is at fault, then we are innocent, right? *Defect of character* suggests that we have had it forever, or at least was given it without our own permission, so perhaps it follows that we are not to blame for anything our *defect of character* causes—in our life or in regard to other people. "Sorry, there is nothing I can do about it—that's just who I am."

Step 6 makes us face this uncomfortable truth about ourselves, that we are both responsible for our defects of character, and simultaneously powerless to change ourselves. This is agonizing from the perspective of our own ego, which wants to be in control of as much as possible, but at the least all of ourselves.

If God as we understand God created us (which makes sense because we know we didn't create ourselves), then it logically follows that if a change in our character can be made, it can likely be made by its creator—God as we understand God. There may be a tendency to fool ourselves while in the process of spiritual emergence because so much is changing. Some of that change is in our character, and hopefully the change is for the good. Some of the greatest challenge of spiritual emergence is our own resistance to the change. Character transformation involves letting go on a deep level, and we may find ourselves wrestling with this—part of us wants to change, part of us doesn't. Step 6 helps this process of transformation to be easier.

If our part of the responsibility is to be *willing* for this change to occur, then that is something that is within our power. We may not be able to change our own *defects of character*, but we do have our own individual will that we can assert *to be open* to our character being changed.

## **Step 7**

### **Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings**

Step 7 is a deeper, more committed act of humbling ourselves and of trusting in the God of our understanding. It is a conscious courageous acceptance of our reliance on a higher power, with the trust that our troubles and confusion, “madness” and “insanities,” be they real or imagined, can be quelled by a power greater than ourselves. We become willing to release our grip on and let go of our self-centered and self-obsessed way of life. It is as simple and as difficult as admitting that we need help and then verbally asking for it from God as we understand God.

Thankfully, we are no longer alone because we have developed a sense of God as we understand God, and we are no longer pretending to be self-sufficient. We can look at ourselves openly and honestly. We have examined the areas of ourselves where we need the most help and healing. We no longer “beat ourselves up” over them.

We long to return to sanity so that we can live in a space of inner peace, and we are willing to submit ourselves to our Higher Power for the sake of this desire.

## **Step 8**

### **Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.**

Step 8 refers to accountability, of accepting responsibility for our own actions and how they have affected others. The active process of making a list creates a sense of tangibility which helps us take the list out of the part of our brains where we can ignore or gloss it over. The list makes it easier for us to look at it directly and bring it into the Light so that we can then do something about it. The important element of this step is the ‘willingness’ to make amends. This step involves: 1) identifying all the people your actions have impacted, and 2) having the willingness to contact those people.

Doing harm does not always mean doing wrong: sometimes invading peoples' boundaries when we think we are helping to heal and transform them may feel like harm to them. This step may require us to ask another what we can do to make amends and requires understanding that others

may not be able to articulate their feelings of being harmed/invaded/disrespected. They may feel manipulated, inferior, or uncomfortable. This step involves learning to be invited by others, in contrast to pushing healing, resolution, communication, and agendas, even if we think we know what is best for them. We may need to live with things remaining 'open' if the timing is not right to make direct amends. The key aspect is being 'willing' to make amends.

It may be possible to identify individuals with whom we need to make amends by thinking about relationships that stir up feelings of guilt or sadness. What would it look like to make amends with these people? It may involve apology, or simply acknowledging that the other party has been negatively affected and that there may have been other ways to handle the situation. It may be possible to approach people you wish to make amends with and explain, "I'm doing the 12 Steps and I'd like to make amends, how can I?" It may involve asking the person questions to show interest and involvement in their life. Making amends from a distance may be more appropriate for those of us who have trouble with boundary setting. That is, this step involves assessing whether it is appropriate to approach a person we would like to make amends with, and sometimes it may not be. In some cases, unearthing 'old wounds' may do more harm than good. If the relationships are over and making direct amends is not possible, praying or reflecting may still help or it may still be possible to offer amends in other ways (e.g., involvement, support).

In particular for us in spiritual emergence, this step entails the responsibility of being honest with ourselves about our abilities, gifts, and talents and how they impact others. We can learn to recognize through validation what our gifts and abilities are, so that we can be appropriate with how we use and practice them. This step involves learning how to recognize the way our actions have affected others while still balancing our own needs. Step 8 is a process of learning and coming to realizations about ourselves and others, and the dynamics of our relationships. It is part of a process of growth. It is about realizing that acknowledgement can be powerfully healing, for both ourselves and for others. Sometimes that acknowledgement involves realizing that others have not hurt us intentionally, nor did we intentionally hurt others. But we can learn from the situations in order to avoid future hurt for both ourselves and others.

## **Step 9**

### **Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others**

In Step 9 we review ways we may have acted out and hurt people unintentionally or intentionally and find ways to make amends. Making amends means speaking the truth about a situation. Self-forgiveness is essential.

Step 9 requires courage and discernment. The previous steps have prepared us for Step 9. Without going through the previous steps we might not have the clarity to make amends properly. Too much guilt and self-loathing might make us feel the need to apologize for things inappropriately. Too much anxiety or pride might make us brush over things we really do need to make amends for. We may need to build a new foundation for our relationships and this could take time but we should also not procrastinate or delay if possible.

The simplest and most direct way to do Step 9 is to contact each person on the phone or in person and apologize. Sharing that “I am in the process of doing the 12 Steps” can ease awkwardness in some cases.

It is important to discern whether apologies and amends can cause more harm to the person. This can be discussed with the group, the sponsor, or a 12-Step counselor, and/or taken to prayer. In the case of an institution, a donation can be sent—possibly anonymously. If it is determined that harm might be done with apology or amends, then we can pray and/or create a ritual ceremony to make amends.

We realize we need to find healthy ways of using our anger, if that is the situation. We can utilize anger as a fuel for activism or creative works. We need to be aware that anger can be explosive and hurt ourselves and others in our lives if expressed in the wrong ways, and can cause our minds and bodies to get ill if it goes unexpressed. We may need to find ways of breaking the cycle of ancestral/transgenerational patterns and anger. Step 9 can help all of these situations. Again, prayer and reaching out to others can assist us in finding the best way to resolve unexpressed anger.

Step 9, like the other steps, has its own rhythm and timing. Listening carefully and letting God lead the timing is particularly essential because it involves affecting other people directly. Best not to rush or give deadlines, or even have strong expectations. Trusting the God of our understanding is the best way to ensure that our apologies and amends enrich others’ lives, rather than further offending them.

## **Step 10**

### **Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.**

Continuing to take personal inventory has to be motivated from inner desire, or it will not happen. Examining what the results of personal inventory is makes up the first part of this step. What are the benefits? Why do we want to continue to search fearlessly within ourselves to honestly face our behaviors and their consequences?

People note a variety of benefits such as clearer thinking, clearer relationships, better sleep, less confusion, better communication, increased compassion for others and increased self-compassion. Another motivation is relationship with God and clarity in prayer. Another motivation is trusting that the 12 Steps, which have worked for so many people over so many generations carries its own wisdom and through practice we will see the benefit of it.

After we find the motivation to take personal inventory regularly, How regularly is necessary? If we are able to keep up with what we are doing during the day, we can keep an ongoing inventory and apologize immediately. In some ways, this may be the ideal. However, in a busy day, many interactions, including self-talk, go unnoticed. At the end of the day, if we set aside time for reflection, we can usually scan the day in our mind and notice times of unease. These might be times that we were offended, someone else was offended, or we betrayed ourselves. Sometimes

the hours between when these things occurred and the end of the day bring the space needed to let the emotions soften so that the occurrences can be looked at more clearly.

Taking inventory at night has a few other advantages. One is that we are likely to sleep better by clearing out un-resolved memories/feelings. As second is that we will remember more clearly the day before we go through a nights sleep, and third, it is nice to start the next day freshly, without carrying things from the day before.

How prompt is prompt for admitting our shortcomings? We can admit them promptly in the moment when we are harming only ourselves. If we do not catch in the moment the way we are promptly harming someone else, we can come up with a plan in the evening for a future amends.

Those of us who are in the chaos or uncertainty of spiritual emergence or emergency may find this difficult, because keeping a regular schedule is one of the challenges of our situation. Yet, keeping a regular schedule is also one of the solutions of our challenges. This type of daily reflection can be an anchor in an otherwise chaotic daily routine that can help us to ground our feelings and clear our minds.

Daily personal inventory also involves admitting when things went right, when we behaved well, and when we felt good. Following the daily scan of when things didn't feel right with a scan of when they felt right is one way to bring in that balance each night. Gratitude is a healthy emotion to nurture, and daily reflection of what we are thankful for can be a nice way to end our personal inventory.

## **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.**

After working the 10 steps, with so much focus on repairing harm we had done in the past, and working to discontinue the defects in our character to prevent harming others in the future, this step seemed at first like a breath of fresh air. *Oh, good! We get to focus on God and prayer and what is good about my future!* As we delve more into the commitment to pray and meditate, we found that setting aside this important and sacred time each day is not so easy. In, fact, we begin to discover that it is impossible to rely upon our own self-discipline to set aside this time. Somehow, each day has its own way of gobbling up that time, and the harder we try, the more elusive that time of solitude becomes. Then we find ourselves relying upon what we learned in the earlier 10 steps, that is, that we cannot do it ourselves, but we can turn it over to God in our willingness. This has worked . . . We begin to steadily consistently pray and meditate, but continually need to reach out to God to prevent this special daily time from slipping away into our daily busyness.

In this step, *conscious contact* poses a very specific challenge, which is to reach deeper than the simplistic, "I know God is always with me" answer that comes out so readily. This step is not about knowing, it is about practicing. To practice consciously contacting God takes not only self-

discipline, but humbleness, because throughout the day as we experience self-confidence and success we quickly begin to operate without any sense of need of God, which soon leads to becoming unconscious of God. Thus, the beautiful result of prayer and meditation, which can often bring us to feeling better and happier, can have the effect of allowing us to drift away from the source of that happiness. If we do not consciously seek God's presence, then we drift into autonomy from God, then eventually into trouble. Thus, setting aside regular times for practicing prayer and meditation have become very important to us.

Our prayers are changing gradually from prayers of asking for rescue and relief to asking for guidance and to become aware of God's will. This seems like a natural continuum, ever since that low desperate point we had to reach to want to enroll in the 12 Steps. As we became rescued, we felt relief. As we recognized God's divine presence in our life, we have sought guidance, and become more and more curious about learning God's will for us and in this world.

This circles around to the 12-Step process of continuing to discover what God is and what *my understanding of God* is.

Lastly, in this step, we pray for the power to carry out God's will. This is a new kind of power for us—not like our own individual power that we used to solely rely upon. This is not self-centered, self-aggrandizing, self-protective, or self-esteem building. This new power comes through us when we surrender ourselves to God, allowing Divine Will to direct our life. The more we let Divine Guidance determine our actions, the more relaxed and grateful and balanced and gracious we become. We are learning to rely upon this Divine Power not only for large things like facing challenges or meeting intimidating requirements, but also in little things like choosing when to leave the house for an errand, how to answer someone's phone call, or how to prioritize a to-do list. When we feel the result of turning our will over to Divine Will, the results are so good that we resolve each time to do it in every detail of our life, yet, over and over again, we forget and return to our habitual way of hacking through the crowded clutter of our lives on our own. Daily meditation and prayer help us to change this deeply ingrained habit. What could be more important for in our lives than to change this habit—adjusting our minds and lives to seeking and doing God's will?

In practicing Step 11, we have come to notice another character defect that was not so obvious when doing the earlier Steps. We have come to notice that the same helping behavior that we are sometimes led by Divine Guidance to offer, can at other times, when it originates from our own thinking and will, do harm instead of good. This makes it very important to us to be listening carefully for discerning, including discerning whether and when to offer help to others.

Doing harm does not always mean doing wrong: sometimes just invading people boundaries when we think we are reaching in to help them...that can feel like harm to them, or at least disrespect. They may not be able to articulate their feelings of being respected/invaded. They may feel manipulated, or inferior, or otherwise uncomfortable.

It may be that when we tune into God's will in the moment, we are being led to be honest with our selves about our abilities, our gifts & our talents, and the right timing of when to share them with others. We can learn to recognize our gifts & abilities, yet it is also important to follow

Divine Guidance regarding when they are useful to other people, rather than offensive, detrimental, or simply wasted.

We are learning, through waiting on God's indications, to look to be sure we are invited by other people, in contrast to pushing our own healing, resolution, communication, or agendas on them, even if we think it is good for them. We can comprehend now that trying to heal & transform others can be a subtle form of abuse. We believe through prayer and meditation, we are becoming aware of pushing my "good" agendas on others. Thus, we cycle back into Step 7; we ask for God to remove the shortcoming of compulsive "giving" or "teaching" pushing our agenda on other people uninvited by them or by God.

In Step 11 we are pro-actively seeking conscious contact. Our life had become unmanageable – *because* we lost contact with God. Or, in the case of spiritual emergence, because we so suddenly became aware of God that we could not consistently keep conscious of the new awareness we had discovered. Conscious contact with God means the communication is consistent and it is going both ways—we are talking to God and we are also experiencing listening to/responding to God, such as being aware of synchronicities, recognizing divine grace such as peace, sudden resolution, prayers answered. Our trust is continuous and our resulting calm brings our being into wholeness and balance. We find ourselves drawn to our own particular ways of working to find alignment with our own intuition, alignment and place within the greater system of the universe. If we can't sense conscious contact with God as we understand God, then we seek help to develop this in our lives. We look to good sources like attending the 12 Step groups, asking people we respect, and setting aside sufficient time for meditation and prayer.

## Step 12

**Having had a Spiritual Awakening, as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all of our affairs**

Conjure up the image of a lighthouse and its beacon, guiding ships through the darkness, safely to shore. We now become guides in assisting others finding their way back to sanity. We are no better than they, but we are equal peers having also gotten lost and been fortunate to be able to find our way back to a sane life. We are here to accompany others on their journey and by doing so, set an example to live honestly in a grounded heart centered loving state on a daily basis. We have accepted our survival of the spiritual storm that we have weathered and endured. We do not take this survival for granted. We embrace this state of Universal Love and recovered stability, and it is now our duty to continue to live in harmony and reside within it. We continue to work to differentiate when we do harm to others and to ourselves. We accept responsibility when we discover we have steered off course and we try our best to keep in mind the bigger picture of humanity and our place within it by continuing to work the 12 steps. We rejoice in our freedom and continue to devote our time and energy to remain free from self-centered madness. Each day we enjoy greater reprieve from our fears and need to control.

Our beacon is now shining brightly for the other “ships in the night” seeking guidance and we lovingly take them into the warm glow of our safe, loving light and assist in delivering them into a sane harbor and out of harm’s way.