

Step Twelve: Section 1 - Sharing our message of hope and healing – **Working the Steps questions**

When we are spiritually awakened through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we share our story of hope and healing with others while continuing to practice the principles of the Twelve Steps in all we do.

Apply your Heart to Understanding (Proverbs 2:2)

Before beginning our personalized study, we prayerfully reread the Step, marking the parts that speak directly to our challenges. As we *Work the Step*, we ponder its principles and take time to journal our honest responses to the questions that follow, remembering to be gentle, patient and compassionate with ourselves as we learn. In this process, the Spirit can guide us toward greater self-understanding and healing, and our eyes will gradually be opened to the next steps in our healing journey. Each time we study and work through the Steps, our understanding will increase. Looking back on our previous journaling will enable us to see the progress we have made. Writing is a therapeutic gift that will bless our lives now and in the future.

We answer those questions that seem most pertinent to our current situation, revisiting additional questions when we are ready until we get to the root of our struggles. As we become willing to honestly look deep within ourselves, we will discover more of who God created us to be and experience the healing He desires for us.

A spiritual awakening

As we have turned to our Savior for healing, He has slowly and gently awakened our wounded spirits, helping us recognize His infinite love and tender care for us, even in our deepest pain. We have learned that He knows us and understands our needs perfectly. We have experienced how His power can strengthen us to do what we could never do on our own. Our faith has grown as we have learned that we are never alone. We have come to rely more personally on the Atonement of Jesus Christ to heal our wounds, soften our hearts, and transform our lives. We feel deep gratitude for our Savior's sustaining power and have been "brought to sing [of His] redeeming love." (See Alma 26:13)

1. What changes, growth, and blessings have I experienced as I have worked the Steps?
 - a. In what ways do I feel more connected with my Savior?
 - b. How have my understanding and appreciation of myself and others changed?
 - c. Which fears or burdens feel more manageable, even if they have not completely gone away?
2. How has my hope for the future grown, even in small ways?
 - a. What helps me imagine a better life ahead?
 - b. As I ponder these changes, what gratitude do I feel towards my Savior?
3. How has my trust in my Savior's ability to strengthen and sustain me grown?
 - a. In what ways have I become more willing to share my honest thoughts and feelings with my Savior?
4. How have I become more aware of God's influence and guidance in my life?
 - a. How does knowing that God is aware of me help me face worry or fear?
5. Has my ability to wait patiently for direction and answers to prayer changed?

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6. In what ways have I seen myself better able to endure pain, calm fears, forgive freely, avoid contention, renew my strength, and help others?

Sharing our message of hope and healing

It is natural to want to share with others the things that have helped us through challenging times. We may feel a desire to offer hope and strengthen faith in our Savior for those who feel weary, discouraged, or wounded. Whether we share part of our experience with a loved one struggling with addiction or simply share a principle that has blessed our own lives, we become willing to follow the direction of the Spirit to know how and what to share. Sometimes the greatest gift we can offer is a listening ear, a caring presence, or an understanding heart.

President Henry B. Eyring taught: “We daily live our lives as a witness of Jesus Christ’s redeeming power . . . We faithfully demonstrate loving mercy and support to all those who are struggling with any test or trial or who are in any need of help . . . You will need to have the Holy Ghost as your companion to know when to speak and what to say and how to testify.”¹

1. Which principles or practices of the Twelve Steps have helped me, and how have I been able to share them with others through my example or words?
2. Have I noticed any promptings to share something I have learned that might encourage or strengthen another person?
 - a. How willing am I to watch for and act upon such promptings?
3. How might sharing an appropriate part of my story allow me to be an instrument in God’s hand to bless others, as I have been blessed?
4. How can I practice the principles of Step Twelve as I participate in support group meetings?
5. How might I recognize when I am healed enough to be comfortable sharing my story with someone else who is struggling?
 - a. How can I offer understanding, loving acceptance, and empathy without judgment?
 - b. How can I leave the outcome in the Lord’s hands and trust in His timing?
6. What value might my own experiences have for someone who needs empathy and understanding?

Recognizing how we have changed

Reviewing some of the principles of the Steps can help us recognize what we have learned and how our lives have changed. As we have surrendered what we cannot control and learned to trust our Father in Heaven, we may have experienced greater peace. Remembering that He is aware of us and can help us face our trials can bring comfort and calm our fears. Through our Savior’s love and sustaining power, our hearts can heal, our hope can grow, and we can find greater freedom from despair. We begin to see how lovingly our Savior is strengthening us, guiding us away from despair and suffering. We find courage as

¹ Henry B. Eyring, “To Touch a Life with Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov 1995

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we gratefully apply these principles in all other challenges in our lives, including financial burdens, illnesses, disappointments and loss.

Looking back can also remind us of how difficult life once felt and help us recognize the growth that may have been hard to see along the way. As we remember the principles that have blessed us, it is natural to feel a desire to share them with others who feel lost, discouraged, or confused. We can offer love and support in the same companionate spirit that our Savior and others have shown to us.

1. In what ways have I felt the Lord carry, comfort, or heal me?
2. How does gratitude for my Savior's help influence the way I want to live or serve?
3. Which principles of Step One might help someone who is struggling?
 - a. Am I comfortable sharing simple principles that have blessed my life?
4. Are there principles from Steps Two through Seven that I might feel ready to share with someone in need?
 - a. Which of these principles have been especially helpful to me?
5. Am I ready to share any principles from the remaining Steps that have made a difference in my life?
 - a. What experiences might I share that could offer hope or encouragement to someone else?

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Step Twelve is gratitude in action

There are many ways to live the principles of Step Twelve. We serve out of gratitude for the Lord's constant, sustaining power and appreciation for the many ways others have supported us along our journey. As we become more aware of those around us, we can seek the Spirit's guidance to recognize who might need encouragement, understanding, or support. Elder Richard G. Scott counseled: "There are many around you who are confused and are seeking solutions to life's perplexing problems. Share your testimony of truth and the power of faith with them."² Living Step Twelve gives us opportunities to "succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees." (See D&C 81:5)

1. How ready do I feel to share an experience of healing or growth with others?
 - a. What parts of my experience might help someone know they are not alone or offer hope and encouragement?
2. How can listening to the promptings of the Spirit help me know when, what, and with whom to share?
3. How might God work through *me* to lift and strengthen someone who needs help?
4. Would I feel comfortable sharing how this workbook has helped me or inviting someone to attend a support group meeting?
5. How might I help a friend feel more comfortable attending a meeting for the first time?
6. What could I do to prepare to serve as a sponsor?
 - a. Would beginning by serving as group leader or facilitator, staying after the meetings to offer support, or taking calls from others in my group help me prepare?
7. What might I do to be ready to serve as God would want me to – as a friend, a support person, a sponsor, or by starting and leading a meeting?
8. What have I felt as I have supported others in need?

² Richard G. Scott "The Sustaining Power of Faith in Times of Uncertainty and Testing," *Ensign*, May 2003