

Step 11

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

“...Spirituality is simply another level of “knowing” or finding. Often this takes the form of a journey or quest. To undertake such a spiritual quest, you will need to make special preparations. Here are suggestions for what you might need. “

A dream journal.

Buy yourself a book with blank pages. As you plan and prepare for this quest, keep a log of all dreams you remember, even if they are only fragments. If you are having trouble remembering your dreams, keep a tape recorder by your bed. Transcribe the dreams in the morning. Record the day, the dream, and the feelings you had as part of the dream. Dreams bear important messages from within ourselves....

A seeking place.

Select a time when you will be undisturbed...whatever you can manage to dedicate to your spiritual quest. This time should be when you lay daily demands aside and not be distracted by family, friends, job, or other factors.

A guiding metaphor.

Look for an analogy or metaphor for this time of your life. Survivors of child abuse...often use the turtle. They notice how the ways of the turtle can be helpful. Turtles are survivors of eons of evolutions; they evolved a tough shell to protect vulnerable parts; they pursue a deliberate pace on land but allow themselves grace in the open seas; and they know how to pull in to avoid harm. Find a metaphor or analogy that can help you think about this time.

A collection of sacred things.

Native Americans have the concept of a medicine bundle. Recovering people use the concept of a “God box.” Whatever term you use, gather together things of special significance to you that symbolize empowered moments of your life. Program medallions, sponsor gifts-collect anything that will help you connect with your own spiritual roots.

A spiritual mentor.

Based upon their own experience, a spiritual director or holy person can help you. Whether it be the exercises of St. Ignatius or the Vision Quest of the Sioux, holy persons help prepare you for the quest. They support you during the experience. They debrief you later to help you understand your experiences. They are special guides for this time.

Usually a quest takes months of preparation and lots of coaching from the spiritual mentor. Sometimes there are readings to be done, information to be gathered, or special materials to be found. There is no magic in this preparation. It is simply preparing yourself.

During the actual quest, take care to journal your experiences...

Blessings on your effort!

Taken from, A Gentle Path through the Twelve Steps: The classic Guide for All People in the Process of Recovery. Patrick Carnes, Ph.D. Hazelden Minnesota 1993. p. 279-280.

-What I especially like about Dr. Carnes, "Gentle Path," is that it is not exclusive to any one fellowship. It can be used by anyone in the recovery process from any addiction, whether it is alcohol, food, drugs, sex, or codependency. It does not matter.

How did you do the eleventh step? Did you try Dr. Carnes "gentle way" through this step? Share your thoughts, comments on this method. Share your Experience, strength, and hope on how you did the Eleventh Step in your respective 12-step fellowship. We welcome constructive criticism too.