

1 **Step Eleven**

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

6

7 *Faith and humility come together for many of us in Step Eleven as our relationship with God*
8 *deepens and strengthens. We work to improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power*
9 *through prayer and meditation, as we seek our Higher Power's will for us. Practicing Step*
10 *Eleven is a continual process that requires effort, patience, and commitment. We open*
11 *ourselves to profound spiritual growth as we work this Step.*

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13

14 **Approaching Step Eleven**

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16 As we reflected back on the prior ten Steps, many of us recognized that a Higher Power had
17 been with us. In Step Two, a Power greater than ourselves became a tangible concept. Our
18 trust in that Power grew as we worked Step Three and decided to turn our wills and our lives
19 over to God's care. With the foundation of these Steps, many of us relied on our relationship
20 with our Higher Power to help us through the next Steps and to move forward in grace. With our
21 Higher Power's guidance, and that of our sponsors, co-sponsors, or Step study groups, we
22 continued to grow in our recovery. Little by little, many of us witnessed miracles as we put our
23 trust in our Higher Power, and this helped our faith to blossom.

24

25 The words of Step Three are echoed in Step Eleven: "God as we understood God." Steps Two
26 and Three invited us to come to know and trust in a Higher Power of our own understanding.
27 Step Eleven offered us the opportunity to revisit our understanding of our Higher Power and
28 deepen our connection. Some of us held tightly to our initial understanding of our Higher Power.
29 For others, our concept of our Higher Power evolved and changed as we worked the Steps.
30 However we approached it, Step Eleven gave us the spiritual freedom to follow our hearts and
31 our intuitive wisdom to determine what worked for us individually.

32

33 **Improving Our Conscious Contact**

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35 Through Step Eleven, we opened ourselves to connecting with our Higher Power through prayer
36 and meditation. Some of us combined prayer and meditation into a single action. Others saw
37 them as two separate acts. Many conceptualized prayer as talking to God and meditation as
38 listening.

39

40 Determining how to pray was a very personal choice for each of us and often evolved and
41 changed over time. We discovered there were as many ways to pray as there were individuals
42 in COSA. Some of us used religious prayer and practice. Spiritual places of worship were a
43 haven where we could sing or chant our prayers together in community. Others were
44 uncomfortable with formalized religious practices. We may have experienced religious or

45 spiritual abuses, or received shaming messages from religious institutions and even our families
46 of origin about “God” and our place in the universe. Our sponsors were there to remind us that
47 COSA is a spiritual and not a religious program, and we had the freedom to develop our own
48 prayer and spiritual life.

49
50 We may have searched for new traditions of our own, expressing ourselves very personally to
51 our Higher Power. Some of us found prayer through journaling, reading, spending time in
52 nature, or experiencing connection in our COSA groups. We might have memorized and recited
53 prayers that resonated with us. Or we prayed without words, connecting to our Higher Power
54 through our innermost thoughts and feelings. Whether in a quiet place or among others with
55 whom we felt safe, we sought conscious spiritual connection through prayer.

56
57 As with prayer, we also found that there was no right or wrong way to meditate. Some of us
58 carved out tranquil time to sit in stillness and listen. Letting go of outside distractions, we looked
59 deep inside ourselves and quieted our thoughts. Focusing on our breath took us to a quiet
60 calmness where we strengthened our connection with the Divine.

61
62 If one meditation practice did not work for us, we tried another, maybe several, to comfortably
63 clear our minds and calm our hearts. Some of us meditated by holding a sacred object, lighting
64 a candle, or listening to music. Concentrating in the quiet of a COSA room or spending time in
65 contemplative writing were other options. We may have experimented with active forms of
66 meditation such as walking in nature, practicing yoga, or even connecting with our pets. Most of
67 us found that our preferred methods ebbed, flowed, and changed as we grew in recovery.

68 69 **Seeking God’s Will**

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71 While Step Eleven gave us room to decide how to pray and meditate, this Step advised us to
72 pray only for knowledge of God’s will for us and for the power to carry that out. We had to
73 practice letting go of our self-will and instead asked for the courage and wisdom to know and
74 carry out God’s intention. Some of us asked God to tease out divine will from our own selfish
75 will. While sometimes God’s will was immediately clear to us, at other times we needed to wait
76 patiently to receive the message.

77
78 In the past we might have been tempted, when praying, to ask for specific solutions to specific
79 problems. We may have asked our Higher Power to do things our way, to give us what we
80 needed, or at least what we thought we needed. We might have even bargained with our Higher
81 Power, saying things like, “If You change the behavior of my loved one, I promise to be a better
82 person.” But we were learning that forcing solutions or attempting to figure everything out on our
83 own were forms of self-will.

84
85 Some of us experienced our work in Step Eleven as the ultimate surrender, which in turn
86 opened us to our Higher Power’s gifts of ease, grace, joy, and abundance as we had never
87 before experienced. When we surrendered our will to our Higher Power, we often found that we
88 were provided with everything our hearts could want and need. By letting go of what we thought

89 we wanted and opening to God's will for us, we discovered new possibilities and choices. Step
90 Eleven led us to paths that we might not have otherwise considered. Often, we received more
91 wisdom and strength than we knew possible or than we could muster when left to our own
92 devices.

93
94 This kind of surrender required immense trust, and in truth, trust was hard for many of us. In the
95 past, and perhaps even in our current relationships, our trust had been violated. Trusting our
96 Higher Power may have brought up similar feelings of fear and wanting to control. We were
97 gentle with ourselves as we wrestled with our faith and tried to trust the process anyway. We
98 realized we neither had to do it alone nor do it perfectly. For those of us with past spiritual
99 abuses, the idea of "God's will" could have felt punishing or frightening. We reminded ourselves
100 that Higher Power was a loving presence in our lives that had our best interests at heart.

101
102 Our sponsors were there by our side, guiding us and sharing their experience, strength and
103 hope. They listened to us express our fears and doubts, and they encouraged us to reach out to
104 our Higher Power for guidance when we felt stuck or unsure. We were inspired by our sponsors
105 and fellow COSA members. We noticed their serenity when they talked about their connection
106 to their own Higher Power, and we were encouraged.

107
108 Even if we concluded that there were spiritual mysteries that we might never fully comprehend,
109 we became more comfortable with not having all the answers. We began to trust implicitly. We
110 were opening ourselves to faith, and our trust in God began to flourish. We did not have to
111 figure anything out. We happily became the passenger and let Higher Power take the wheel.

112
113 In seeking God's guidance, we asked questions such as: "What is your will for me?" "How can I
114 be the best version of myself?" "How can I best serve today?" "How can I carry out my
115 purpose?" "What is my next step?" Or we simply prayed, "Your will, not mine, be done." As we
116 worked this Step, many of us found that God's will for us transformed over time, sometimes
117 daily or even by the hour.

118
119 Many of us established regular rituals to improve our conscious contact with God. Some created
120 a spiritual routine to connect with God first thing in the morning. As we went throughout our day,
121 we might have paused to pray and meditate. Some of us set an alarm to remind ourselves to
122 check in spiritually or attend a COSA meeting focused on the Eleventh Step. Many of us needed
123 the consistent, humble reminder that we were not running the show; our Higher Power was.

124
125 Sometimes, we received clear messages from our Higher Power and recognized them as
126 spiritual guidance, rather than what we used to believe were merely coincidences. What used to
127 feel as a vague presence became a tangible force as our awareness and intuition were finely
128 tuned. Many of us began to experience a feeling of being in sync and in step with God.

129
130 By listening to our Higher Power, we learned to hear our own truths, as well. Before recovery,
131 many of us felt disconnected from ourselves. Practicing the Eleventh Step brought us home to

132 ourselves. We became aware of the inner voice that knew what to do. We relaxed and simply
133 listened.

134
135 In addition to seeking God's will for us through prayer and meditation, we also sought the power
136 to carry out that will. While we began Step One acknowledging our powerlessness, by the time
137 we reached Step Eleven, many of us felt empowered to act from a place of spiritual
138 centeredness and well-being. Whatever our Higher Power guided us to do, we began to feel
139 both the clarity and courage to follow through. Action and empowerment were priceless gifts of
140 our Step Eleven Work.

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142 **The Gifts of Step Eleven**

143

144 *Many of us found Step Eleven to be a Step of deepening spiritual connection and grace. It*
145 *brought us closer to God and helped us let go of our own will. We opened up to God's will and*
146 *to the miracles of who we are on this Earth. We turned our faces toward a Higher Power and*
147 *eagerly received the miraculous gifts of recovery.*

148

149 *Many of us experienced a deep sense of joy, peace, and freedom. We felt a calm growing within*
150 *us, a sense that all would be well when we connected with our Higher Power's will for us. We*
151 *experienced a new and deepened feeling of confidence, trust, and faith, knowing we were*
152 *making decisions led by our Higher Power. When we could trust that things would work out,*
153 *even when we did not see how, we felt peace. We confidently leaned into our Higher Power's*
154 *strength and knew that we did not have to do it alone. We rested in the care of our Higher*
155 *Power and in the loving fellowship of COSA.*