

Working the 12 Steps in 15 Minutes **AS A COUPLE**

Choose a specific situation to talk about, one on which you want to “pull some weeds” for your relationship, but perhaps not The Biggest Issue You Face.

Go through these steps individually, listening to one another, then repeat the questions JOINTLY.

1. We admitted we were powerless over (the situation, person, condition, emotion, or other experience), that our lives had become unmanageable.

(I am 100% responsible for that over which I DO have power; not responsible for anything on my partner's side)

What am I *powerless* over in this situation?

e.g. partner, their feelings, their behavior, past choices & behaviors, automatic negative thoughts or feelings that arise

How has my life or experience inside this situation become *unmanageable*?

How did I contribute to unmanageability in this situation or between us?

On the joint round:

For example:

We are powerless over the fact that we are two different people with different priorities, needs, and feelings.

We are powerless over the ways our defects of character, respectively, fuel one another's defects. The more, the more.

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

What am I doing that just might be insane?

Insanity might include doing the same thing over and expecting different results. The root word of sane is the Greek *sanus*, meaning of sound body, healthy. In what way might my current behavior or mental state be un-healthy?

Do I believe something greater than me can restore me to sanity, be it a bigger idea, a better perspective, a benevolent presence, the power of Love, or Nature, or The Universe, Spirit, God, or something else Larger, whether divine or otherwise?

What would sanity look like here?

e.g. praying before we go into a challenging situation, connect with each other with an affirmation of unity & alignment, touch, hug, etc.

How can I invite in HP?

What am I doing that just might be insane? (Insanity might include doing the same thing over and expecting different results.)

Do I believe my Higher Power, as I understand my HP, can restore me to sanity?

On the joint round:

In what way is our relationship “insane” and what would sanity look like for our relationship?

Do we believe the HP of our relationship can restore our relationship to sanity?

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

Am I ready to turn over *any outcome* to the care of that Something Larger?

Say a prayer silently or aloud, surrendering and turning over the specific situation.

On the joint round:

Pray together, turning the relationship and both your wills for it over to the care of HP as you understand it.

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

List up to three character defects/”programs for success” you run/coping mechanisms/thought patterns that no longer serve you that arise in this situation.

Some examples: denial, dishonesty, avoidance, self-loathing, proving myself, scarcity mentality, resentment, a consciousness of fear, future-tripping

On the joint round:

What are your couple character defects?

E.g.: what are those self-defeating, harm-causing cycles between you... what defects does your RELATIONSHIP have?

A power dynamic that leads to loss of connection or mutuality?

How do your patterns cut off intimacy or lead to self-protection?

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

Can you identify the core beliefs or problems that are causing you grief?

Some examples of core beliefs: I'm not worthy of love/I'm "less than" others/ I will be abandoned if I don't accommodate others/I can't survive on my own/ other people won't survive without my help/advice/money

On the joint round:

Name and admit the relevant pattern you've uncovered that you would like to have your Higher Power remove from your relationship.

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

How are these character defects/"programs for success" you run/coping mechanisms/thought patterns you listed in Step Four hurting you and others?

Conversely, what has been the *payoff* for continuing to hold onto them even after it became clear that they cause harm? What will you sacrifice (read: make sacred) by letting them go?

Are you ready to **consent** to allow your Higher Power remove those defects?

Here again, pray a moment

On the joint round:

Tell your HP you would like to be made ready to remove those defects. Grieve the loss of any side benefits or excitement or other reward the pattern or dynamic creates. Become ready.

7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

Ask your Higher Power silently or aloud to remove all those character defects that cause harm and unmanageability in this situation.

Here, you are surrendering all efforts to manage this behavior or pattern by your own will. You are turning it over and asking something larger to change you, rather than trying to change yourself.

On the joint round:

Pray together, asking the HP of your relationship to remove its patterns that do not serve it.

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

Whom have you hurt?

If you have hurt someone else, you most likely have hurt yourself, so you belong on this list.

What specifically was the harm? Not your thoughts or actions, but the cost to them?

On the joint round:

What amends do you as a couple need to make?

We may have amends to our relationship, for instance, for not giving ourselves grace for mistakes or as much kindness and gentleness as we need.

We may have amends as a couple to anyone else who might have been harmed by our tension or behavior - our family members, pets, colleagues, neighbors, friends...

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.

Consider how to make amends, including to yourself. Amends is not just saying "I'm sorry." It's the commitment to truly seeing the impact, making sure the person knows you're aware of the harm, and being willing in the future to be accountable for not repeating that harm.

Give yourself and/or your partner your amends.

On the joint round:

As a couple, to whom do you owe amends outside the two of you? Together, make the joint amends or the plans to do so.

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

Commit to looking at the situation again until it is cleared up for you. Especially check your progress 2-3 times in the coming month with how your Higher Power is removing the the character defects you asked to have removed.

On the joint round:

Commit to looking at this situation again together. Check back, looking for miracles that your Higher Power creates in your relationship and check in with supportive people.

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.

Pray or meditate about this situation, and pray for everyone involved. Find the highest vision you can connect with for how this situation could work out for the good of all concerned, and invite your Best Self, God, Nature, The Universe, or whatever you think of as your Higher Power to show you what you need to see about this situation, what IT wants to have happen, and ask for the power to do the best possible thing.

On the joint round:

Practice conscious contact through every situation you face together, inviting your HP to be there between and around you, guiding your words, actions, and character

12. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as THE result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all areas of our lives.

Be aware of any spiritual awakening or clarity you have had as a result of working these Steps. Share your learning with your partner and live by the principles you learned.

On the joint round:

Call up gratitude for this process and the ways HP is growing your relationship and as the result of these steps, your spiritual path as a couple and as individuals.

Well done!