

DEP-ANON
Family and Friends
12 Step Workbook

*A Healing Guide For Those Who Love Someone
Living With Depression*

September, 2025

■ DEP-ANON FAMILY AND FRIENDS WORKBOOK

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■ Source & Acknowledgment

This workbook was inspired by—and deeply rooted in—the original *DEP-ANON Manual*, a formidable resource dedicated to all the families and friends of the depressed. That manual has served as a guiding light for the fellowship, offering clarity, compassion, and a path toward healing.

The reflection questions throughout these pages were compiled from the *DEP-ANON Manual* and shaped through the collaborative efforts of a co-sponsorship study group within the fellowship. This group came together with a shared intention: to study the manual in depth, reflect honestly, and support one another in living the principles of recovery.

This project is not the work of one voice, but many. It reflects the wisdom, vulnerability, and courage of those who have walked this path—some quietly, some in community, all with a desire to heal.

It is offered in the spirit of service:

- To honor those who came before
- To support those still walking the path
- And to carry the message forward with love and integrity

To everyone who contributed, shared, listened, and showed up:

Thank you.

Your presence made this possible.

 Welcome Letter from the DEP-ANON Fellowship

Dear Friend,

If you've found this DEP-ANON group, it means you've taken a brave and tender step. You've chosen to seek healing—not just for your loved one, but for yourself. That matters. You matter.

Loving someone with depression can feel like walking through fog. You may have spent months—or years—trying to hold everything together, losing pieces of yourself along the way. You may feel invisible, exhausted, or unsure of what's real anymore. You may carry guilt for having your own need guilt for having your own needs, or fear that you're not doing enough.

We want you to know:

You didn't cause their depression.

You can't control or cure it.

But you can heal.

And you don't have to do it alone.

DEP-ANON is a fellowship of people who understand what you're going through. We gather not to fix each other, but to listen, reflect, and grow. We follow the Twelve Steps—not as a checklist, but as a spiritual path toward clarity, peace, and connection.

In this space, you are safe.

You are allowed to feel.

You are allowed to rest.

You are allowed to rediscover your own strength.

This workbook is your companion. It will guide you through the fog, one step at a time. It will help you reconnect with your spirit, set boundaries without guilt, and find peace—even if your loved one is still struggling.

We walk this path together.

Welcome to DEP-ANON.

We're so glad you're here.

Take your time. You're in the right place.

With love and hope,

Your DEP-ANON Fellowship

INTRODUCTION to DEP-ANON

If you've found your way to this workbook, chances are you love someone who is living with depression—and you're hurting too.

Depression doesn't just affect the person who has it. It ripples outward, touching relationships, families, and communities. You may feel helpless, confused, angry, or exhausted. You may have tried everything to "fix" your loved one, only to feel more lost. You may even feel guilty for wanting space, or for admitting that their pain is affecting your own well-being.

This workbook is for you.

DEP-ANON is a fellowship for those who love someone with depression. It's a place to reclaim your peace, restore your boundaries, and reconnect with your own emotional life. Through the Twelve Steps and shared experience, we learn that we didn't cause our loved one's depression, we can't control it, and we can't cure it. But we can heal ourselves.

Inside these pages, you'll find:

-  Reflections and prompts to help you explore your own feelings
-  Tools for setting boundaries and practicing self-care
-  Stories and insights from others who've walked this path
-  Step-by-step guidance through the DEP-ANON Twelve Steps

You are not alone. There is hope—not just for your loved one, but for *you*. It's not a clinical manual or a quick fix. It's a companion for your journey as a supporter—one that honors your experience, helps you understand depression more deeply, and gently guides you toward healing.

WHAT IS DEP-ANON?

DEP-ANON is a fellowship of individuals whose lives have been impacted by someone else's depression. Modeled after the principles of other 12-Step recovery programs, it offers a safe, nonjudgmental space for emotional healing, spiritual growth, and mutual support.

Why DEP-ANON Exists

Depression doesn't just affect the person living with it—it ripples outward, touching everyone close to them. Supporters often feel overwhelmed, confused, and isolated. DEP-ANON provides a place to share experiences, learn from others, and begin to heal.

Core Beliefs of DEP-ANON

- You didn't cause your loved one's depression
- You can't control or cure it
- You deserve support, clarity, and peace
- You can learn to cope with it
- Healing is possible—through connection, reflection, and spiritual growth

What Happens in a DEP-ANON Meeting?

- Members share their experiences and feelings
- The Twelve Steps are discussed and applied
- Literature and readings offer insight and encouragement
- There is no cross-talk, advice-giving, or judgment
- Anonymity and confidentiality are respected

WHO IS DEP-ANON FOR?

Anyone affected by another person's depression, including:

- Partners and spouses
- Parents and children
- Siblings and extended family
- Friends, coworkers, and caregivers

WHAT DEP-ANON IS NOT

- A therapy group or clinical treatment
- A place to diagnose or analyze your loved one
- A forum for venting without reflection
- A substitute for professional help

THE GIFT OF DEP-ANON

DEP-ANON helps you shift the focus from your loved one's depression to your own emotional health. It offers tools to set boundaries, release guilt, and rediscover your own strength. It reminds you that you are not alone—and that healing is possible, even in the midst of pain.

WHO IS THIS WORKBOOK FOR?

Before you begin, let's make sure you're in the right place.

There are two fellowships that support healing from depression—each with a different focus:

Fellowship	Who It's For	Purpose
Depressed Anonymous (DA)	People who are depressed AND Members who continue to share experience, strength and hope in their recovery.	A Twelve Step program for those seeking support and spiritual growth in managing their depression. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop saddening yourself.
DEP-ANON	Supporters of someone with depression	A Twelve Step fellowship offering emotional support, self-care tools, and healing for those affected by a loved one's depression.

 If you're living with depression yourself, we encourage you to explore [Depressed Anonymous](https://depressedanonymous.org) depressedanonymous.org (DA). If your loved one is open to support, you can share DA with them.

Note on Dual Experience

Some members of DEP-ANON also live with depression themselves. If that's true for you, know that you are not alone—and that your experience is valid.

This workbook is focused on the emotional healing of those who support someone with depression, but your own mental health matters too.

If you're seeking support for your personal experience with depression, we encourage you to explore [Depressed Anonymous](https://depressedanonymous.org). Many members find strength in participating in both fellowships. You are welcome here, in all your complexity.

This workbook is written for *DEP-ANON members*—those who love someone with depression and are seeking clarity, boundaries, and emotional healing.

You're not here to fix them.

You're here to find peace, strength, and support for yourself.

WELCOME TO THE WORKBOOK

You've arrived at a sacred space—one built not on perfection, but on honesty, courage, and healing. This workbook is not a test, a prescription, or a fix. It's a companion for your journey, offering gentle guidance as you begin to shift focus from someone else's struggle with depression to your own emotional well-being. Whether you're here with decades of experience or just discovering DEP-ANON, this is your invitation to pause, reflect, and reconnect with yourself. There is no right way to move through these pages—only your way. Take your time. Be tender with your heart. You are not alone.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE IN THESE PAGES

This workbook is structured to walk beside you, step by step. Here's what you can expect:

- **Clarity and Understanding**

You'll learn what depression is—not just from a clinical lens, but from an emotional and relational perspective. You'll begin to see why your loved one behaves the way they do, and why it affects you so deeply.

- **Validation of Your Role**

Supporting someone with depression is often invisible work. This workbook will name the weight you've been carrying and affirm that your experience matters.

- **Emotional Exploration**

Through guided journaling and adapted Twelve Step work, you'll begin to unpack your own feelings—grief, resentment, guilt, hope—and find language for what's been living inside you.

- **Tools for Boundaries and Self-Care**

You'll learn how to support your loved one without losing yourself. That means setting boundaries, recognizing codependency, and rediscovering your own needs.

- **A Path Toward Healing**

Whether your loved one recovers or not, this workbook is about *your* healing. It's about reclaiming your emotional space, finding peace, and reconnecting with your own life

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Throughout these pages, you'll find questions—some direct, some open-ended, some quietly provocative. You'll also encounter reflections, prompts, and spiritual invitations designed to stir your inner world. You may notice there's no space provided to write your answers. That's intentional. This workbook isn't meant to be filled out like a form—it's meant to be lived with.

We encourage you to bring a notebook, journal, sketchpad, or whatever medium feels most natural to you. Some members write in longhand, others draw, some speak their thoughts aloud or share in meetings. However you choose to engage, let it be personal and true. This is your recovery, your rhythm, your voice.

Before We Begin

In the next section, we'll take a closer look at depression itself—what it is, how it manifests, and why it's so hard to understand from the outside. This will help you enter the emotional work with compassion and context.

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF DEPRESSION

Depression isn't just sadness—it is complex, often invisible, and can reshape relationships, routines, and emotional landscapes.

In this section, we'll explore what depression is, how it manifests, and why it can be so difficult to understand from the outside. This knowledge isn't meant to diagnose or fix your loved one—it's meant to help you make sense of what you're experiencing and begin to separate depression, and its symptoms, from the person.

Understanding depression is the first step toward compassion, boundaries, and healing—for both of you.

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is a mental health condition that affects how a person thinks, feels, and functions. It's more than sadness—it's a persistent, often invisible weight that can distort reality, drain energy, and isolate the person experiencing it.

Common Symptoms

- Deep, ongoing sadness or emptiness
- Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed
- Fatigue or lack of motivation
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or hopelessness
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Thoughts of death or suicide

WHAT DEPRESSION IS NOT

- A personal failure
- Laziness or weakness
- Something that can be “snapped out of”
- A reflection of how much someone loves you

WHY UNDERSTANDING MATTERS

When you love someone with depression, their behavior may feel confusing or hurtful. They may withdraw, lash out, or seem indifferent. Understanding that these actions stem from the depression—not a lack of love or effort—can help you respond with compassion instead of resentment.

THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT ON SUPPORTERS

- Feeling rejected or shut out
- Walking on eggshells to avoid triggering them
- Guilt for not being able to “fix” things
- Anger or resentment over unmet needs
- Fear of saying or doing the wrong thing
- Exhaustion from constant vigilance

DEPRESSION DISTORTS CONNECTION

People with depression often feel unworthy of love, which can lead them to push others away. Supporters may interpret this as coldness or rejection, when in fact it's the illness speaking. Recognizing this distortion helps you separate the person from the condition.

You Can't Cure Depression—But You Can Care Wisely

Your role is not to rescue or repair. It's to care with boundaries, to support without losing yourself, and to seek your own healing alongside theirs.

Reflection Prompt

What emotions have you been carrying silently?

In the next section, we'll explore what you may be experiencing in your role as the supporter of your loved one.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SUPPORTER

Introduction

Loving someone with depression can feel like living in the shadows. You may find yourself constantly monitoring their moods, tiptoeing around conversations, or trying to “fix” what feels broken.

In the process, your own emotional life may quietly disappear from view. You become the steady one, the strong one, the helper. But strength without support becomes suffering.

This chapter is an invitation to turn gently inward—to name what’s true for you, and to begin healing not just around your loved one’s pain, but your own.

The Invisible Weight

Supporting someone with depression can feel like:

- Tiptoeing through conversations, unsure what might trigger pain
- Carrying the burden of their well-being on your shoulders
- Silencing your own emotions to protect theirs
- Being pushed away just when you’re trying to help
- Feeling guilty for expressing your own hurt or needing space
- Wondering if you’re helping—or just enabling
- Losing touch with your own joy, identity, and peace

You’ve been strong for so long. But strength without support becomes suffering.

 *What You May Be Feeling*

You may recognize some of these emotions in yourself:

- **Guilt** — for not being able to help, for needing space, for feeling angry
- **Grief** — for the version of your loved one you miss, or the relationship you hoped for
- **Resentment** — for carrying more than your share, or feeling emotionally neglected
- **Fear** — of saying the wrong thing, of losing them, of being blamed
- **Confusion** — about what's helpful, what's yours, and what's theirs
- **Loneliness** — even when you're physically close, you may feel emotionally abandoned
- **Exhaustion** — from being strong for so long, without support

These feelings are valid. *You are allowed to name them. You are allowed to feel them.* And you are allowed to begin healing from them.

 WHAT IT MIGHT SOUND LIKE INSIDE YOU

Emotion	Inner Voice Example
Guilt	"If I were more patient, maybe they'd feel better."
Resentment	"I've given so much, and I feel invisible."
Fear	"What if they get worse? What if I say the wrong thing?"
Confusion	"I don't know what's helpful anymore."
Exhaustion	"I'm so tired, but I feel selfish for wanting a break."
Loneliness	"No one understands what I'm going through."

WHY THIS PAGE MATTERS

You are not just a bystander. *You are affected.*

Your emotional health matters.

You deserve support, clarity, and healing—not just survival.

This workbook is here to help you:

- Name what you're feeling
- Accept your limits without shame
- Reconnect with your own needs and identity
- Learn how to support your loved one without losing yourself

Journaling Space

Let your thoughts flow freely. No judgment, no pressure.

- What emotions surfaced as you read this?
- Can you relate to these experiences, in whole, or in part?
- What does it feel like in your body, your heart, your mind?

FROM SUPPORTER TO SELF HEALER

THE SHIFT BEGINS HERE

This workbook is not about changing your loved one. It's about changing your relationship with yourself.

You'll learn to:

- Set boundaries without guilt
- Recognize what's yours to carry—and what isn't
- Reconnect with your own emotional life
- Find peace, even if your loved one is still struggling
- Release the need to fix, rescue, or control

This is the beginning of your healing. Not because you've given up—but because you're choosing to live with clarity, compassion, and emotional integrity.

WHY THE SHIFT MATTERS

When someone you love is in pain, your instinct may be to pour all your energy into helping them. You might become hyper-attuned to their moods, their needs, their silences. Over time, your own emotional life begins to orbit theirs. You stop asking: *What do I feel? What do I need? What do I want?*

This shift—back to yourself—isn't selfish. It's sacred.

Here's why it matters:

- **You can't pour from an empty cup.**
Constantly giving without replenishing leads to burnout, resentment, and emotional depletion.

- **Your healing is not dependent on theirs.**
Waiting for them to get better before you feel better keeps you stuck in a cycle of helplessness.
- **You are a whole person, not just a caregiver.**
Your identity, dreams, and emotional truth deserve space and attention.
- **Clarity creates compassion.**
When you're grounded in your own emotional reality, you can show up with healthier boundaries and deeper empathy.
- **Freedom begins with responsibility.**
Taking ownership of your own healing is the first step toward emotional freedom.

This shift doesn't mean abandoning your loved one. It means anchoring yourself so you don't drown in their storm. It's the difference between being a lifeguard and being pulled under by the tide.

A Shared Truth

"You didn't cause it. You can't control it. You can't cure it.
But you can cope with it—and you can stop contributing to it."

A Note About the Term "DSO"

In DEP-ANON, we sometimes use the term **DSO**, short for *Depressed Significant Other*. It's a way to refer to the person in your life who is living with depression—whether they're a partner, parent, sibling, child, or close friend.

We use this term with deep compassion.

It's not meant to reduce your loved one to a diagnosis, but to acknowledge the emotional impact

their struggle may have on you.

It helps us speak honestly about our experience, while still holding space for theirs.

 *When we say “DSO,” we mean someone you care about deeply—someone whose pain you’ve witnessed, and whose wellbeing matters to you.*

You’re welcome to use whatever language feels right to you.

We simply offer this term as a way to talk about a complex relationship with clarity and care.

 **TRANSITION PAGE: LET THIS SINK IN**

Before You Move Forward, Take a Moment to Be Here

You've just explored the idea that healing begins within.

That your transformation can shift the entire dynamic.

That you are worthy of care, even when someone you love is struggling.

Let that truth settle in your bones.

 **Reflection Prompts**

- What surprised me about the idea that healing starts with me?
- What resistance do I feel when I think about letting go of control?
- What part of me is ready to begin healing, even if they're not?

 **Gentle Invitation**

You don't have to rush.

You don't have to fix anything.

Just breathe.

Just be.

When you're ready, we'll begin to review the Steps.

They're waiting for you—steady, sacred, and full of grace.

 *Turning Inward: The Path to Healing*

You've named what it means to love someone who is suffering from depression.

You've felt the invisible weight.

You've seen how your own emotional health has been shaped, stretched, and sometimes lost in the process.

That truth matters.

It's not selfish. It's sacred.

Now, the journey turns inward.

The Twelve Steps of DEP-ANON are not about fixing your loved one.

They're about reclaiming your own peace.

They're about letting go of control, releasing guilt, and finding clarity in the chaos.

This is where healing begins—not with them, but with you.

You don't have to be ready for all of it.

You only have to be willing to begin. Let's take the next step.

If you're ready to explore practical ways to support your healing, you'll find a collection of tools in the Appendix – Tools for Recovery.

These resources are here when you need them—whether today, next month, or whenever you feel ready.

 **NEXT CHAPTER: WALKING THE 12 STEPS**

The 12 Steps are the heart of DEP-ANON.

They guide us from confusion to clarity, from control to surrender, from isolation to connection.

You don't have to understand them all at once.

You only have to begin.

THE 12 STEPS OF DEP-ANON

The 12 Steps are the heart of DEP-ANON. They offer a path—not to fix your loved one, but to find healing for yourself.

A Note About “God” in the 12 Steps

You’ll notice that the 12 Steps of DEP-ANON refer to “God”—but we want to be clear:

This is not a religious requirement.

In our fellowship, “God” is simply a placeholder for something greater than ourselves.

It might mean spirit, nature, love, community, inner wisdom, or simply the idea that healing doesn’t have to be done alone.

You are free to define this in a way that feels right for you—or not at all.

DEP-ANON welcomes people of all faiths, no faith, and everything in between.

These steps invite you to let go of control, embrace spiritual growth, and discover serenity in the midst of uncertainty. You don’t have to believe in anything specific to begin. Just a willingness to explore, reflect, and grow.

 THE 12 STEPS OF DEP-ANON

1. We admitted we were powerless over our depressed loved one —that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons who we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
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 it out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry the message to our depressed loved one and others, practicing these principles in all our affairs.

 *How the Steps Help*

- They shift the focus from your loved one's depression to your own healing
- They offer structure in the midst of emotional chaos
- They help you release guilt, control, and resentment
- They guide you toward spiritual clarity and emotional resilience

 **TRANSITION: FROM UNDERSTANDING TO ACTION**

You've explored the landscape of DEP-ANON—the pain, the patterns, the principles. You've begun to see how depression in someone else's life can quietly reshape your own. You've learned that your healing doesn't depend on their recovery. It begins with you.

Now, the journey turns inward.

The Twelve Steps are not a cure—they're a path.

They offer structure, but they also demand honesty, surrender, and courage.

Each Step is an invitation to let go of what's breaking you, and to reach for what might restore you.

This is where transformation begins—not with fixing the depressive person, but with reclaiming your own life.

Let's begin with Step 1.

STEP 1: ACCEPTANCE - ADMITTING POWERLESSNESS

“We admitted that we were powerless over depression, and that our lives had become unmanageable.”

STEP ONE OVERVIEW

This step invites you to release the illusion of control over your loved one’s depression and begin the journey inward. It’s not about fixing them—it’s about reclaiming your emotional space and learning to live with clarity, compassion, and boundaries.

Step 1 is about **acceptance**—not giving up but letting go. It’s the moment we stop fighting reality and start facing it with honesty and compassion. Acceptance doesn’t mean we like what’s happening. It means we stop pretending we can carry it all alone.

You may have tried everything—encouragement, advice, tough love, silence. You may feel exhausted, guilty, or resentful. This step invites you to pause and say:

“I can’t fix this. And that’s okay.”

“I am allowed to accept what is—and begin healing from here.”

FIVE BELIEFS TO GROUND YOU

These truths can help you release guilt, reclaim your energy, and begin to heal:

1. **I didn’t cause it.**

Depression is not my fault.

2. **I can’t control it.**

My loved one’s moods and healing are not mine to manage.

3. **I can’t cure it.**

No amount of effort, advice, or love can “fix” their depression.

4. **I can cope with it.**

I can learn tools to care for myself and navigate this journey.

5. **I can stop contributing to it.**

I can reflect on my words, reactions, and patterns—and choose compassion over control.

 **Before You Begin**

Healing isn't linear. Some days you'll feel ready to explore. Other days, you may only have the energy to read and reflect. That's okay.

This workbook is here to meet you where you are.

- Take what resonates.
- Skip what doesn't.
- Return when you're ready.
- There's no wrong way to move through this.

You don't need to finish everything in one sitting. You don't need to have the "right" answers. You just need to show up—with honesty, curiosity, and compassion for yourself.

 *What You May Have Tried*

This list isn't here to judge you—it's here to honor your effort and help you reflect. You've likely tried many things out of love, hope, and desperation.

Here are some common ways supporters try to "fix" their loved one's depression—and how those efforts may have played out:

1. Encouraging them to "get out more"

- You may have hoped fresh air or social interaction would lift their mood.
- They may have withdrawn further or felt misunderstood.

2. Suggesting therapy or medication

- You may have wanted to offer a solution.

- They may have resisted, shut down, or agreed but didn't follow through.

3. Offering pep talks or positive thinking

- You may have tried to inspire hope or motivation.
- They may have felt invalidated or unable to respond.

4. Taking over responsibilities

- You may have stepped in to help with tasks they couldn't manage.
- You may have felt overwhelmed or resentful.

5. Withholding emotions to "keep the peace"

- You may have avoided conflict or difficult conversations.
- You may have felt invisible or disconnected.

6. Trying to be perfect so they'll feel better

- You may have hoped your stability would help them feel safe.
- You may have felt exhausted or unseen.

7. Using tough love or ultimatums

- You may have felt desperate to spark change.
- They may have spiraled deeper or pulled away.

8. Staying silent and hoping it passes

- You may have felt helpless or unsure what to say.
- You may have felt anxious or emotionally stuck.

9. Sacrificing your own needs

- You may have put their wellbeing ahead of your own.
- You may have lost touch with your own identity.

 Which of these have you tried? What were you hoping for—and how did it affect you? List any other things you have tried.

Reflection Questions

 You don't have to answer every question today. Let your heart guide you. Return to these prompts as often as you need.

CONTROL & FIXING

- **In what ways have I tried to “fix” or manage my loved one’s depression?**
You might think of times you offered advice, tried to cheer them up, or took on tasks they couldn’t handle.
- **Do I believe I might be the cause of their depression?**
It’s okay if this feels heavy. Many supporters carry guilt that isn’t theirs to hold.
- **Have I tried to control their depression by criticizing their inactivity or behavior?**
You may have hoped it would motivate them—but how did it affect your connection?
- **When I suggest meds, exercise, or positive thinking, do I believe it will “cure” them?**
What happens inside you when they don’t respond the way you hoped?
- **Do I think that if I start “sweeping my own side of the street,” they might begin to do more for themselves?**
This is a powerful shift. What does focusing on your own growth look like?

- **Is it possible I gave myself the job of “fixing” them to avoid feeling helpless?**
What would it mean to let go of that role and feel your own feelings fully?
- **Do I feel like a victim in this relationship?**
That feeling is valid. What helps me shift from that mindset toward empowerment and healing?
- **How often did I feel I could control their negative feelings and behavior?**
Was I thinking that if I were “enough,” they would bounce back?

EMOTIONAL IMPACT & GROWTH

- **Do I feel guilty for not being able to make things better?**
Guilt is common—but it doesn’t mean you’ve failed. What would it feel like to release that guilt?
- **Do I blame my loved one for how depression has affected my life?**
Resentment often hides grief, fear, or exhaustion. What’s underneath for you?
- **Has this group (DEP-ANON or other support) helped me see the importance of focusing on myself—not on my loved one?**
What does that shift feel like? Do I have hope?
- **Do I feel seen and appreciated in this relationship?**
If not, that pain deserves acknowledgment. You matter too.
- **Do I now feel more optimistic that I can learn ways to cope with my situation?**
Even small steps toward self-care can build hope.
- **Does Step 1—accepting powerlessness over their depression—feel true for me?**
If not yet, that’s okay. What parts of it do I relate to?
- **If I attend DEP-ANON meetings, do I see hope in what others share about taking care of themselves?**
Do I believe that hope is available for me too?

- **What would it feel like to release the need to fix them?**
Can you imagine a version of support that honors both of you?
- **What do I need right now that I've been ignoring or denying myself?**
Rest? Boundaries? Validation? You're allowed to name it.
- **How would my life change if I accepted that I can't control their healing?**
Would I feel more peace, clarity, or freedom?
- **What does support look like when it's rooted in compassion, not control?**
How can I begin to shift toward that kind of support?

Gentle Reminder

You are not responsible for curing your loved one.

You are allowed to feel everything—grief, guilt, hope, and exhaustion.

You are allowed to accept what is, and begin healing from here.

Journaling Space

Let your thoughts flow freely. No judgment, no pressure.

What emotions surfaced as you answered these questions?

What truths are you beginning to uncover about your role, your limits, and your needs?

What does acceptance feel like in your body, your heart, your mind?

Affirmation

Acceptance is not weakness—it's wisdom. I release what I cannot control and honor what I feel.

STEP 2: HOPE — BELIEVING IN POSSIBILITY

“We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

Theme: Faith

Before You Begin

In Step 1, we acknowledged that our lives had become unmanageable—and that trying to control or fix our Depressed Significant Other (DSO) was costing us our peace.

Step 2 invites us to consider that healing might come from something beyond our own effort. This “Power greater than ourselves” doesn’t have to be religious. It can be anything that helps us feel supported, grounded, and less alone—love, nature, community, inner wisdom, or even the fellowship of DEP-ANON itself.

We don’t have to believe perfectly. We don’t even have to be sure. All that’s asked is a willingness to consider that help is possible—and that we are worthy of clarity, steadiness, and emotional healing.

This step is about opening the door, even just a crack, to the idea that we don’t have to carry everything alone.

Journal Prompts

Let these questions be invitations, not obligations. You can return to them anytime.

EXPLORING THE IDEA OF A HIGHER POWER

- **What does the phrase “a Power greater than myself” stir in me?**
Does it feel comforting, confusing, distant, or something else?

- Have I ever felt connected to something bigger—like nature, music, love, or a sense of peace?

What did that feel like in my body or heart?

- Before joining DEP-ANON, how did I view the idea of a Higher Power?

Was it shaped by religion, culture, family, or personal experience?

- Has anything shifted in me since I began focusing more on my own healing?

NOTICING SUPPORT BEYOND MYSELF

- Have I experienced moments in DEP-ANON where I felt supported by something beyond my own willpower?

Could that support have come through someone's story, a shared silence, or a sense of connection?

- Is it possible, now that support is available, I can accept and face those feelings?

- In what ways have I invited my Higher Power to guide my life?

How has this spiritual shift affected my relationship with my DSO?

Reflecting on Past Beliefs

- Do I struggle with the idea of a Higher Power?

If so, what beliefs or experiences shape that struggle?

- What do I already believe in that brings me strength?

Nature, love, music, community, intuition—what lifts me up?

- What does “a Power greater than myself” mean to me today?

Does it feel personal, abstract, spiritual, relational?

Trusting Something Deeper

- Is it possible that this program is helping me build trust—not just in others, but in something deeper within myself?
- What does trust feel like to me?
Have I noticed myself softening, opening, or letting go—even just a little?
- What would it mean to surrender control—not as defeat, but as relief?
Can I imagine letting go of the need to fix everything?

Gently Naming Barriers

- What gets in the way of trusting a power greater than myself?
Is it fear, past hurt, or the belief that I have to do everything alone?
- Can I meet that resistance with kindness, rather than judgment?
- When I hear the suggestion to “let go,” do I feel resistance?
If so, what might that resistance be trying to protect?
- Can I explore it with curiosity and care, rather than shame?

REIMAGINING SANITY

“Sanity” here doesn’t mean perfection or mental health in a clinical sense. It means emotional steadiness, clarity, and the ability to respond rather than react.

- What does “sanity” mean to me—not as a diagnosis, but as a feeling?
When do I feel emotionally steady, clear, or grounded?
- What helps me return to that place?
- What changes in my thinking about my relationship with my DSO have occurred since working with DEP-ANON?

 **RELEASING THE ROLE OF FIXER**

- **Have I ever felt like it was my job to fix or save my DSO?**
What would it feel like to gently release that responsibility?
- **Can I imagine what might open up in me if I let go of that burden?**

 *Gentle Reminder*

You don't have to have it all figured out.

Belief doesn't have to be loud or certain—it can begin as a quiet hope, a flicker of possibility.

Even the smallest willingness to trust something greater than yourself is enough to begin.

You are not alone in this journey. Healing is not a solo act.

 *Affirmation*

“I am open to the possibility of support beyond myself.

I trust that I don't have to carry everything alone.

I am worthy of clarity, peace, and emotional steadiness.

I allow myself to grow, gently and in my own time.”

Take a breath. Let this step settle in your body. You can return to these questions anytime.

STEP 3: LETTING GO — TURNING IT OVER

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

 This section invites surrender—not as weakness, but as relief. You don’t have to carry it all alone.

Theme: Surrender and Trust

Before You Begin

Step 3 is about choice. It’s about deciding to let go of control and trust that something greater—however you define it—can help guide your healing. You don’t need to have a perfect understanding of a Higher Power. You just need a willingness to release what’s weighing you down.

This workbook is here to meet you where you are.

- Take what resonates.
- Skip what doesn’t.
- Return when you’re ready.
- There’s no wrong way to move through this.

You don’t need to finish everything in one sitting. You don’t need to have the “right” answers. You just need to show up—with honesty, curiosity, and compassion for yourself.

STEP 3: SURRENDER AND TRUST

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

STEP 3 TRANSITION: TURNING IT OVER

Having come to believe in a power greater than ourselves, we now face a deeper invitation: surrender. Step 3 asks us to make a decision—not just to believe, but to trust. This is where we begin to let go of our need to control outcomes and instead place our will and our lives in the care of something greater.

This isn't about passivity—it's about partnership. We begin to walk with faith.

Step 3 is an invitation to soften. To stop gripping so tightly. To surrender—not in defeat, but in relief. We've tried to carry the weight of our DSO's struggles, and it's left us exhausted, anxious, and disconnected from ourselves.

This step asks:

 *What if I didn't have to do it all alone?*

“Turning our will and lives over” doesn't mean losing ourselves. It means choosing to trust that something wiser, gentler, and more loving can help guide us. Whether that's a spiritual presence, inner knowing, or the support of community—you get to define it.

Surrender is not weakness.

It's the beginning of healing.

 Step 3 Reflection Questions

 *Let's explore this step in gentle layers. You don't need to answer everything at once. Let your heart guide you.*

 1. What Does Surrender Mean to Me?

- **When I hear the word “surrender,” what feelings come up?**
Let yourself notice any resistance, softness, or curiosity.
- **Does it feel like giving up—or could it mean letting go of what’s hurting me?**
Explore the difference between defeat and relief.
- **Is the word “surrender” becoming part of how I live and think about my family environment?**
How is this idea showing up in your daily life?
- **Am I beginning to accept that I cannot change another person, only myself?**
What does that acceptance feel like in your body or heart?

 2. My Will and My Grip

- **Do I still feel the need to control my DSO? What does that urge feel like in my body or thoughts?**
Notice where control shows up—tightness, anxiety, planning.
- **Have I begun to make a plan—or even a small intention—to release this pattern and trust something greater?**
Even a tiny shift counts. What are you willing to try?
- **Where have I been trying to force, fix, or manage things that aren’t mine to control?**
List a few examples. Be gentle with yourself.

- **What would it feel like to loosen my grip?**

Imagine your hands unclenching. What emotion rises?

3. Trusting Something Greater

- **What does “a Power greater than myself” look like to me?**

It could be spiritual, natural, communal, or intuitive.

- **Has my perception of the God of my understanding shifted since joining DEP-ANON?**

What has softened, expanded, or become clearer?

- **Have I thought more about a Higher Power since becoming part of this group?**

What questions or insights have surfaced?

- **Do I believe in something bigger than myself? How does this belief help me live more peacefully with my DSO?**

Notice how trust might reduce tension or fear.

- **Can I imagine that this Power wants to help me—not punish or test me?**

Let yourself feel into the possibility of kindness.

4. Facing My Fears

- **What fears come up when I think about letting go of control?**

Name them gently. You don’t have to fix them.

- **Am I afraid of what might happen—or afraid of being vulnerable?**

Explore the layers beneath the fear.

- **Can I meet those fears with compassion, rather than judgment?**

What would it sound like to comfort yourself?

5. Emotional Resilience and Coping

- Even though my DSO's behavior affects me deeply, have I begun using tools to shift from negative to positive feelings?

What helps you stay grounded when things feel chaotic?

- What's one example of a tool or phrase that helps me cope and stay grounded?

It could be a mantra, breathwork, or a boundary.

- How have I learned to respond differently when others criticize my DSO—especially now that I understand the Four C's?

What has changed in your reactions or self-talk?

6. Choosing to Trust

- What does it mean to choose to heal myself?

How does it feel to choose yourself, even gently?

- Am I willing to trust that I deserve peace, even if I don't know exactly how to get there?

Let yourself sit with the idea that peace is possible.

- Do I now believe that recovery happens on my Higher Power's schedule—not mine?

What does patience look like in your healing journey?

- Can I share how I've begun to trust that healing is not mine to control, but something I can allow?

Describe a moment of surrender or grace.

7. Reclaiming My Role

- What does it mean to me to move from surviving to thriving?

What does thriving look like in your life?

- How am I choosing to reclaim my life, one step at a time?

Celebrate even the smallest acts of self-care.

- Have I noticed my trust in others growing, now that I feel a sense of kinship with family, friends, or the DEP-ANON fellowship?

What relationships feel safer or more supportive now?

Gentle Reminder

Surrender is not weakness—it's a brave act of trust.

You don't have to carry what was never yours to hold.

Letting go doesn't mean abandoning your DSO—it means choosing to care for yourself.

You are allowed to rest.

You are allowed to trust.

You are allowed to heal.

Affirmation

"I surrender what I cannot control.

I trust that I am supported, even when I feel uncertain.

I choose healing, peace, and emotional freedom.

I am safe to let go. I am safe to trust."

Final Reflection

- Do I believe that healing from depression is possible over time?
- How has my perspective on recovery changed since joining DEP-ANON?
- "What you seek, will seek you." Am I finding that the more I seek peace and give up control, the better I begin to feel?

STEP 4: FACING MYSELF – THE COURAGE TO BE HONEST

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

Theme: Honesty

 *Before You Begin*

Take a breath. This step is not about judgment—it’s about truth. You are not here to punish yourself or relive pain. You are here to reclaim your inner world with compassion. If emotions rise, let them. If resistance appears, greet it gently. You are safe to explore. You are worthy of knowing yourself.

You might want to set aside quiet time, light a candle, or journal in a space that feels comforting. This is sacred work.

STEP 4 TRANSITION: LOOKING WITHIN

With our will aligned to a Higher Power, we’re ready to look inward. Step 4 is a courageous act of self-examination. It’s not about shame—it’s about clarity. We begin to uncover the patterns, fears, and resentments that have shaped our lives. This inventory is a gift: it gives us insight, and with insight comes the power to change.

 **Sidebar: On Fear**

Making an inventory can feel terrifying. You might worry about what you’ll uncover—or what it says about you. That fear is normal. It means you care.

This step isn’t about judgment. It’s about truth. And truth, when held with love, becomes a tool for healing.

If you feel overwhelmed, pause. Breathe. You don’t have to do it all at once. You only have to begin.

STEP 4 OVERVIEW

Step 4 is an invitation to tell the truth—not to others, but to ourselves.

We’ve spent so much time managing, rescuing, or reacting to our DSO (Depressed Significant Other) that we may have lost sight of our own inner world. This step helps us reclaim it through honest reflection. Not brutal honesty. Not shame-based honesty. But the kind that says:

“I deserve to know myself.”

We ask:

- What beliefs have I absorbed that no longer serve me?
- What patterns have I developed to survive?
- What emotions have I buried, and what truths am I ready to face?

This is not a confession. It’s a clearing.

Honesty is the doorway to healing.

Step 4 Reflection Questions

Let’s explore this inventory in layers. Each section includes gentle prompts to guide your reflection.

1. Honest Emotions

- **What emotions do I feel most often in relation to my DSO?**
Notice recurring feelings—are they fear, guilt, frustration, sadness?
- **Are there feelings I’ve hidden—even from myself?**
What emotions feel unsafe or unacceptable to express?
- **What emotions do I judge or fear, and why?**
Do you label certain feelings as “bad” or “weak”?
- **What steps am I taking to be true to myself?**
Are you honoring your emotional truth in daily life?

2. Honest Patterns

- **What coping patterns have I developed in response to my DSO's behavior?**
Do you withdraw, over-function, or try to fix things?
- **Do I try to fix, control, avoid, or over-function?**
Which behaviors feel automatic or exhausting?
- **Have these patterns helped me survive—and are they still helping me today?**
What once protected you may now be holding you back?
- **How have the first three Steps of Deapanon helped ease the grip of control over my DSO?**
Reflect on any shifts in your mindset or behavior.

3. Honest Beliefs

- **What beliefs have I internalized about myself because of my DSO's struggles?**
Have you absorbed messages like "I'm not enough" or "It's my fault"?
- **Do I believe I'm responsible for their happiness or healing?**
Explore the weight of this belief.
- **Have I felt "not enough," "too much," or "always wrong"?**
Name the identity stories you've carried.
- **What beliefs am I ready to challenge?**
Which ones feel outdated or untrue?
- **Am I finding that the more control I give up over my DSO, the better I begin to feel?**
Describe how surrender has brought relief.
- **How does this happen?**
What shifts internally when you let go?

💛 *Reminder: Feeling resentment doesn't make you a bad person. It doesn't mean your loved one is bad either. People can be well-intentioned and still cause pain. You're allowed to name your experience. That's how healing begins.*

4. Honest Resentments

- **Are there people I feel resentment toward—my DSO, family, even myself?**
Name them without judgment.
- **What boundaries were crossed or needs unmet beneath those resentments?**
Look beneath the surface of anger.
- **How have I reacted in ways that hurt me or others?**
Be gentle as you name these reactions.
- **Can I name these reactions without shame?**
You are not your worst moment.
- **Have I discovered that the more intense my negative feelings toward my DSO, the more I risk sliding into depression myself?**
Explore this emotional mirroring.
- **Share an instance in your life filled with anger and resentment.**
What did it teach you about yourself?

 *Reminder: It's Okay to See Your Strengths*

You may feel hesitant to acknowledge your strengths.

You may worry it's selfish, or that it somehow takes away from your loved one's struggle.

But here's the truth:

Recognizing your growth, your courage, your insight—does not make you selfish.

It makes you whole.

You are allowed to see what's good in you.

You are allowed to honor the ways you've shown up, survived, adapted, and cared.

 *This isn't about comparison. It's about compassion—for yourself.*

You can hold space for someone else's pain and still celebrate your own progress.

Both things can be true.

 **5. Honest Strengths**

- **What strengths have helped me endure this journey?**
Name your resilience, loyalty, compassion, courage.
- **Have I shown resilience, loyalty, compassion, or courage?**
Give yourself credit.
- **What parts of me deserve recognition—not just repair?**
You are more than your wounds.
- **Is being part of the Depanon Group helping me be more honest about my character defects and strengths?**
Reflect on how community supports your growth.
- **Give an example of how your thinking and behavior has changed.**
Celebrate your progress.

6. Honest Wounds

- **What emotional wounds am I still carrying from this experience?**
Name them gently.
- **Are there moments I've never spoken aloud, but still feel deeply?**
You are allowed to speak them now.
- **What would it feel like to begin healing those wounds—not alone, but supported?**
Imagine healing in connection.
- **Having been depressed yourself, does that experience help you focus more on changing yourself rather than trying to change your DSO?**
How has your own journey shaped your perspective?

7. Honest Truth

- **What truths am I ready to face about myself—not to judge, but to understand?**
Truth is not punishment—it's liberation.
- **What do I want to release, and what do I want to reclaim?**
Let go of what no longer serves. Welcome what empowers.
- **Can I hold space for both my pain and my progress?**
You are allowed to be both healing and hurting.
- **Have you realized that trying to “fix” your DSO—through cajoling or criticism—hasn't changed their behavior?**
Share your experience of this realization.

 8. Group Sharing & Deep Dive

- **When did it occur to you that you might be part of the problem—not because you’re bad, but because you were trying to control what isn’t yours to fix?**

Share how your perspective shifted.

- **After taking responsibility for yourself and practicing daily inventory, have new horizons of hope opened up for you?**

Share one way your life feels different today.

 Gentle Reminder

Honesty is not cruelty—it’s clarity.

You are allowed to know yourself.

You are allowed to tell the truth.

You are allowed to heal.

 Affirmation

I speak my truth with courage and compassion.

I honor my emotions, patterns, and beliefs.

I release shame and choose honesty.

I am worthy of knowing and loving myself.

✨ STEP 5: BRAVERY – THE COURAGE TO BE SEEN – SPEAKING OUR TRUTH WITH COMPASSION

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

Theme: Vulnerability & Connection

Before You Begin

This step is sacred. It asks for courage—not perfection. You are not here to confess in shame, but to speak your truth in safety. You are allowed to be honest. You are allowed to be seen. You are allowed to heal.

Choose someone trustworthy—someone who can hold your story with compassion. This might be a sponsor, a fellow DEP-ANON member, a therapist, or a spiritual guide. You don’t have to share everything at once. You just need to begin.

STEP 5 TRANSITION: SPEAKING OUR TRUTH

Our inventory has revealed much, and now we take the brave step of sharing it. Step 5 is about connection—about breaking the silence that kept us isolated. By admitting our faults to ourselves, to God, and to another human being, we begin to release the weight of secrecy. In this vulnerability, we find freedom.

Sidebar: On Shame

Speaking your truth aloud may stir deep shame. You might feel exposed, or worry you’ll be rejected. That’s the voice of old pain—not the truth of who you are.

Step 5 is not a trial. It’s a release. It’s where secrets lose their power and healing begins.

You are not alone. You are not too broken. You are brave for showing up.

STEP 5 OVERVIEW

Step 5 is a turning point in our healing journey. It invites us to move beyond silent suffering and into the light of truth, vulnerability, and spiritual courage.

We begin to name the patterns, beliefs, and behaviors that have kept us stuck—not to shame ourselves, but to understand and release them.

This is not about blame. It's about clarity. It's about gently uncovering the ways we've responded to our DSO's depression: the ways we've tried to control, fix, or deny, and the ways we've abandoned our own needs in the process.

By sharing our truth, we reclaim our voice, our dignity, and our spiritual center. We learn that we are not alone. We learn that our experiences matter. And we learn that courage is not the absence of fear, but the willingness to face ourselves with compassion.

Step 5 Reflection Questions

Let's explore this step through layers of spiritual honesty, emotional awareness, and relational growth.

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE & LETTING GO

- **How might Step 5 represent the spiritual principle of “Let go and let God” in your life?**
What does surrender look like for you today?
- **How might you personally reword the phrase “exact nature of our wrongs” to better reflect your own experience?**
Does another phrase feel more compassionate or accurate?

SELF-AWARENESS & EMOTIONAL HONESTY

- How has sharing your past and present experiences in dealing with your DSO helped you grow spiritually?

What insights have emerged from speaking your truth?

- Have you ever felt the need to hide negative feelings about your DSO out of guilt or fear of judgment?

What emotions have you kept silent, and why?

- Now that you have the support of DEP-ANON and/or DA, can you begin to safely feel, express, and face those emotions through step work, meetings, journaling, or other tools?

What tools help you feel emotionally safe?

- Have you ever felt that your DSO has power over your emotions—that their wellness determines your own?

How might you begin to reclaim your emotional autonomy?

- Now that you have the support of this group, do you feel more able to do for yourself what you once wished your DSO could do for themselves?

What self-care practices are emerging for you?

RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS & GROWTH

- How are you handling your feelings toward your DSO now that you are a member of DEP-ANON? Has it become easier?

Share an example of emotional growth.

- How has joining DEP-ANON helped you focus on your own growth and take responsibility for yourself?

What shifts have you noticed in your priorities?

- How are you relating to your DSO now that you've joined DEP-ANON? Is this different than before?

Describe any changes in your behavior or boundaries.

- When things aren't going well between you and your DSO, are you able to share with the fellowship and gain support?

What does reaching out look like for you?

- Share a recent situation where you offered your own solutions to similar circumstances.

How did it feel to respond from a place of clarity?

CONTROL, COURAGE & COMMITMENT

- Do you struggle with the urge to control your DSO's behavior?

Share a moment when you resisted that urge. What did it teach you?

- Has your commitment to attending DEP-ANON meetings given you the courage to care for yourself more consistently?

Name one area of your life that's showing noticeable improvement.

- Do you find that admitting your own mistakes in dealing with your DSO to the fellowship feels freeing?

What does emotional honesty feel like in your body?

TOOLS, PLANNING & DAILY PRACTICE

- *"Those who fail to plan, plan to fail."*

Have you been using any tools to support your recovery?

- Would you be open to trying out new tools for support? If so, you may want to refer to the DEP-ANON Manual for Families and Friends of the Depressed (Pages 104–111) or check out the Appendix – Tools for Recovery, (Page 100-113) in this workbook.

List any tools you may already use, or take a look at new tools that may interest you to support your healing.

SHIFTING FROM DESPAIR TO PEACE

- Have you allowed your DSO's isolating behavior to lead you into despair?
What thoughts or habits pulled you downward?
- What are you doing now to change your thinking, feelings, behavior, and motivation?
Name one new practice that brings peace.
- Can you recall a moment when you felt a physical shift from discomfort to peace?
Describe the sensations of that shift.

COMPASSION & UNDERSTANDING

- After reading pages 50–51 in the DEP-ANON book, which describe the mind of the depressed, what emotions arise for you—compassion, empathy, anger?
Let yourself feel without judgment.
- Do you still see your DSO as family?
What does "family" mean to you now?

FACING YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE

- Have you been distracting yourself—perhaps even with your DSO—to avoid facing your own uncomfortable thoughts, feelings, or behaviors?
What distractions have kept you from yourself?
- What might help you begin to face them safely?
List one gentle step toward self-awareness.

 *Gentle Reminder*

You are not alone.

You are not broken.

You are not too much.

You are worthy of being heard, seen, and supported.

Speaking your truth is an act of love.

 *Affirmation*

I speak my truth with courage and grace.

I release secrecy and welcome connection.

I honor my journey and trust the process.

I am worthy of healing, honesty, and peace.

STEP 6: READINESS TO CHANGE

“We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”

Theme: Willingness & Grace

 *Before You Begin*

This step is not about being perfect—it’s about being willing. You don’t need to feel ready in every moment. You only need to be open.

Take a breath. Let go of the pressure to “fix” yourself. Healing is not a race. It’s a quiet unfolding. You might want to revisit your Step 4 inventory before beginning. Notice what patterns, beliefs, or behaviors you’re ready to release. And if you’re not ready yet—that’s okay. Willingness begins with honesty.

STEP 6 TRANSITION: BECOMING WILLING

Having shared our truth, we may feel lighter—but we also see the depth of our character defects. Step 6 is not about perfection; it’s about willingness. Are we ready to let go of the patterns that no longer serve us? This step invites us to open our hearts to transformation, trusting that change is possible.

 *Sidebar: On Readiness*

 *On Readiness*

You may not feel “entirely ready.” That’s okay.

Readiness is not a switch—it’s a slow unfolding.

This step is about willingness, not perfection.

It’s the quiet moment when we begin to open our hearts to transformation.

Healing happens in layers. You are allowed to take your time.

And if the phrase “defects of character” feels uncomfortable, know this:

This step isn’t about shame. It’s about becoming willing to release the patterns, beliefs, and emotional habits that no longer serve you.

Many of these behaviors were once ways you tried to survive.

Now, you’re choosing to heal.

STEP 6 OVERVIEW

Step 6 is about readiness—not perfection. It’s the quiet moment when we begin to open our hearts to transformation.

After identifying our patterns and behaviors in Step 5, we now ask ourselves:

Am I willing to let go of what no longer serves me?

This step is not about forcing change or rushing healing. It’s about becoming willing. Willing to release control, resentment, fear, and self-judgment. Willing to trust that something greater than ourselves can help us grow.

We may not feel “entirely ready”—and that’s okay. Readiness is a process. Step 6 invites us to sit with our resistance, our hope, and our longing for peace. It’s a gentle turning toward grace.

STEP 6: BECOMING ENTIRELY READY TO LET GO OF OUR DEFECTS OF CHARACTER

Section 1: Recognizing Our Defects and Their Impact

These questions help us identify our own patterns and begin the process of self-awareness.

- **What shortcomings have been the most troubling for you?**
Name them gently—without judgment.
- **How difficult has it been to shift your attention from your DSO’s defects of character to your own?**
What helped you make that shift?

- Do you find relief in surrendering your character defects? What changes, if any, have occurred from this?

Describe any emotional or spiritual shifts.

- Am I busy trying to change everyone but myself?

How has the DEP-ANON recovery group helped point out your own defects that need attention?

SECTION 2: WILLINGNESS AND SURRENDER

This section explores the emotional shift toward willingness and spiritual surrender.

- In my willingness to let go of my character defects, as I have listed in my 4th Step inventory, I am finding a new sense of purpose unfolding in my life.

Describe what that purpose feels like.

- How has “willingness” contributed to a better relationship with your DSO?

What changes have you noticed in your interactions?

- What did it take for you to ask your Higher Power to help you remove your own shortcomings, instead of the shortcomings of your DSO?

Is it possible you share some of the same defects? Does this surprise you?

- How has your Higher Power responded to your request to remove your own shortcomings?

What signs of grace have you experienced?

- When it’s hard to stay focused on your own growth, what practices help you return to your center?

List one or two grounding tools.

SECTION 3: SHIFTING FOCUS FROM CONTROL TO COMPASSION

These questions help us release control and embrace compassionate detachment.

- **How has giving your DSO space helped you emotionally and spiritually?**
Has learning more about depression helped you offer that space with compassion?
- **Do you find your thoughts often revolve around your DSO?**
What helps you gently redirect your focus back to your own healing?
- **How do you feel after criticizing your DSO's behavior?**
What alternative responses have helped you feel more peaceful or connected?
- **Have you ever felt pride in trying to "fix" your loved one?**
What helped you shift that attitude toward acceptance and surrender?

SECTION 4: REFRAMING BELIEFS AND LETTING GO OF GUILT

This section uses the DEP-ANON statements of belief to challenge old narratives and foster healing.

- **I didn't cause it: Can you remember when you may have felt that your behavior was the cause of your DSO's depression?**
What helped to free you from this guilt?
- **I can't cure it: Did you believe your love or effort could cure your DSO?**
How long did it take to discover the truth?
- **I can't control it: Have you ever felt that if you were better, kinder, or more loving, your DSO would "bounce back"?**
What helped you release this belief?
- **I can learn to cope with it: Are you starting to believe that you can learn how to cope with it?**
What tools or insights support this belief?

- I don't have to contribute to it: Is it possible you can remain calm and not react, not participate in a push/pull relationship?

Describe a moment when you chose peace over reaction.

Reflection Questions

Self-Inventory and Readiness

- **What defects of character have I identified in myself so far?**
List them with compassion.
- **Which ones feel hardest to let go of? Why?**
Explore the emotional attachment to these patterns.
- **Has it occurred to me that I had a shortcoming that made it more difficult to admit my part in my DSO's ongoing depression?**
What was that shortcoming?
- **Can I name one shortcoming that became an obstacle in my own recovery?**
How did it block your growth?
- **What fears come up when I imagine living without these defects?**
What does freedom feel like—and what makes it scary?

WILLINGNESS AND SPIRITUAL OPENNESS

- **What does "entirely ready" mean to me?**
Does it feel like surrender, trust, or something else?
- **Am I willing to let go of control, even if I don't know what comes next?**
What helps you take that leap?
- **What helps me stay open to change when I feel resistant or afraid?**
List one practice that softens resistance.

- Have I noticed any moments when I was willing to grow, even if I didn't feel ready?

What did those moments teach you?

RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITY

- How have my defects affected my relationship with my DSO?

Name one pattern that created distance or tension.

- Is it possible that my attitude toward my DSO might be one of the reasons they retreat from me or the family?

Explore this with compassion, not blame.

- What thoughts or behaviors might explain my DSO's move toward isolation?

What role might your reactions have played?

- How does willingness to change affect the way I show up in my relationships?

Describe a moment when you chose growth over reaction.

Gentle Reminder

Asking for help is not a sign of weakness.

It is a sacred act of courage.

You are not alone in your healing—and you don't have to carry it all by yourself.

Affirmation

I am willing to grow.

I am ready to release what no longer serves me.

I trust that healing begins with willingness.

I am not alone in this process.

STEP 7: HUMILITY - RELEASING WHAT NO LONGER SERVES

“Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.”

STEP OVERVIEW: THE QUIET STRENGTH OF HUMILITY

Step 7 is a sacred invitation to practice humility—not as weakness, but as quiet strength. It asks us to recognize that we cannot heal alone, and that we no longer need to. We’ve identified our shortcomings in Step 6, and now we ask our Higher Power to help us release them—not through force, but through grace.

Humility means accepting that we are human, imperfect, and still worthy of love. It means letting go of ego, control, and self-judgment, and opening ourselves to transformation. In humility, we stop trying to fix ourselves and others, and instead ask for help with an open heart.

This step is not about shame. It’s about surrender. It’s about trusting that healing is possible, and that we are not alone in the process.

Gentle Reminder

Humility is not thinking less of yourself.

It’s thinking of yourself with compassion, honesty, and grace.

You don’t have to carry your burdens alone.

You don’t have to be perfect to be helped.

You only need to be willing.

Reflection Questions

These questions are designed to guide your journaling, meditation, or group sharing. Let them settle gently into your heart.

Humility and Self-Awareness

Let's begin by exploring how humility lives in you today. You don't need to answer perfectly—just honestly.

- When you hear the word *humility*, what feelings or memories arise? What does humility mean to you today? Has that definition changed over time?
- As you reflect on your shortcomings, notice what emotions surface. Do you feel shame—or a sense of possibility for change?
- Think of a time when someone gently pointed out a behavior or pattern you hadn't seen in yourself. How did you respond?
- Are there any shortcomings you feel reluctant or afraid to release? What might those fears be trying to protect?
- If you could speak to the part of you that still wants control, what would you say with compassion?

Humility and Spiritual Surrender

This section invites you to explore your relationship with surrender. Let yourself be held by the idea that you don't have to do this alone.

- Imagine asking your Higher Power for help—not just with your DSO, but with your own healing. What does that feel like in your body?
- Think of a moment when you asked for help but later tried to take back control. What helps you stay surrendered when fear creeps in?
- How do you experience your Higher Power's presence today? Do you believe they want to help you grow?

- What does it look like to trust the healing process, even when progress feels slow or invisible?
- Reflect on a time when a shortcoming seemed to lift or soften. How did you know it was being removed?
- If your Higher Power could speak to you right now, what words of encouragement or love might they offer?

Humility in Relationships

Humility transforms how we show up with others. These questions invite you to reflect on connection, compassion, and grace.

- Think of a recent conversation in the fellowship. How did humility help you listen more deeply or respond with care?
- What does it look like to show up in your relationships with less judgment and more compassion?
- Recall a time you apologized—not to fix things, but to take responsibility with grace. How did that feel?
- How might releasing your shortcomings allow you to love more freely—and be loved more fully?
- Imagine being seen in your imperfection and still accepted. What does that kind of love feel like?

Affirmation

I walk with humility, not shame.

I ask for help with an open heart.

I trust that my Higher Power is guiding my healing.

I am worthy of grace, growth, and peace.

STEP 8: FORGIVENESS - PREPARING TO MAKE PEACE

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

 **Theme: Forgiveness**

STEP 8 TRANSITION: THE PATH OF FORGIVENESS

After asking for our shortcomings to be removed, we begin to look outward—with clearer eyes and a softer heart. Step 8 invites us into the sacred work of forgiveness. We make a list of those we have harmed, not to dwell in guilt, but to prepare for healing.

Forgiveness begins with truth. It asks us to see the impact of our actions and to take responsibility with grace. But it also asks us to forgive ourselves—to release the shame that keeps us stuck. This step is not about fixing the past; it’s about making peace with it.

We do this work not because we are perfect, but because we are willing. Willing to repair, to restore, and to love again.

Step 8 is a bridge between inner transformation and outward healing. It asks us to face the truth of our past actions—not to punish ourselves, but to prepare for reconciliation. Forgiveness is the heartbeat of this step: forgiveness of others, forgiveness of ourselves, and forgiveness of the circumstances that shaped our choices.

This step is not about rushing into apologies or fixing everything at once. It’s about becoming willing—willing to see, to feel, and to take responsibility. Willingness opens the door to grace. It softens our defenses and allows compassion to flow in both directions.

Forgiveness is not a transaction. It’s a process. And Step 8 is where that process begins.

Gentle Reminder

You are not defined by your past. You are defined by your willingness to grow. Making a list of those you’ve harmed is not an act of shame—it’s an act of courage. You are preparing the soil for healing, and that begins with honesty, humility, and love.

Sidebar: On Resistance

You may feel resistance. That's okay. Step 8 asks us to look at pain—ours and others'—and that's not easy. Resistance doesn't mean failure. It means your heart is protecting something tender.

Willingness doesn't require readiness. It asks only that you stay open. If your chest tightens, if your mind wanders, if you feel the urge to shut down—notice it. Breathe. Let it be there.

You don't have to push through. You only have to stay present.

ON FORGIVENESS AND PAIN

- **What would you say to a family member who feels it's impossible to forgive the pain their DSO has caused?**

Let your empathy speak. What truth or comfort would you offer them?

- **What was the actual process of healing that helped you reach forgiveness?**

Think about the steps, support, or insights that made forgiveness possible.

- **What lessons have you learned from DEP-ANON group members that helped you forgive?**

Recall the wisdom or stories that softened your heart.

ON UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION

- **Have I begun to understand the complexities of depression?**

What have you learned that shifted your perspective?

- **Do I believe depression is experienced the same way for everyone?**

Consider how your DSO's experience may differ from others.

- **Have I accepted that I may not have the answers I once thought I did about how things "should" be? If so, am I willing to work on accepting this?**

Let go of certainty. Embrace curiosity and compassion.

ON DIFFICULT EMOTIONS TOWARD THE DSO

- Have I felt angry, hurt, or resentful toward my DSO—even if it was hard to admit?
Name the emotions you've carried. They are valid.
- Did I feel like a bad person for having these feelings? That they were unacceptable?
Explore the shame or guilt that may have silenced you.
- Is there a part of me that believes these feelings—hurt, anger, resentment—make me feel stronger or safer?
Notice how these emotions may have served a protective role.

ON CONTROL, SAFETY, AND SACRIFICE

- Have I tried to construct a safety net around my DSO, patching holes to protect them—or myself?
Reflect on your efforts to manage or contain their pain.
- Have I felt that my happiness was dependent on their recovery?
Explore the emotional tether between your wellbeing and theirs.
- Have I ever felt dismissed when reaching out for help—from family, professionals, or others? Did I feel guilty for seeking support?
Honor the moments you felt unseen or unsupported.
- Have I ever felt like I was the only reason my DSO was still alive?
Acknowledge the weight of that belief.
- Have I felt like I was living in their shadow?
Notice where your own needs may have been eclipsed.
- Have I felt torn between love and exhaustion, guilt and longing for space?
Let yourself name the tension you've lived with.
- Have I felt unseen by the “system” or those involved in my DSO’s care?
Speak to the invisibility you may have experienced.

- **Have I felt that others depended on me to stay vigilant and responsible?**

Explore the pressure to hold it all together.

ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND AMENDS

- **Am I ready to look more closely at accepting and releasing these feelings—with the tools and support of DEP-ANON?**

Let willingness guide you, not perfection.

- **Did my character defects—such as selfishness, dishonesty, or fear—cause harm? In what ways?**

Be honest, but gentle with yourself.

- **When making my list, did I include how I harmed myself? Why or why not?**

You are worthy of amends, too.

- **How has the willingness to make amends improved my relationship with my DSO and others?**

Notice the shifts that have come from your courage.

- **What does “living amends” mean to me?**

Define what ongoing healing looks like in your life.

- **Do I feel that my needs and feelings were invisible to others?**

Give voice to what was overlooked or dismissed.

Gentle Reminder

Forgiveness does not mean forgetting. It means choosing to heal. You are allowed to feel pain, anger, and exhaustion. You are allowed to grieve what was lost. Step 8 is not about perfection—it’s about willingness. Willingness to see the truth, to honor your own experience, and to begin the process of repair.

TRANSITION: FROM REFLECTION TO STORY

If you've just walked through the questions above, you've already shown courage. Naming harm especially the harm we've caused — is no small thing. It takes honesty, humility, and heart.

The story that follows is one person's experience of Step 8. It's not a blueprint or a perfect example. It's simply a glimpse into how this step unfolded in real life — with all its messiness, grace, and growth. As you read, notice what resonates. Let it remind you that you're not alone in this process.

Two Paths Into the Story

Everyone enters Step 8 from a different place. Some of us are just beginning to feel again. Others have been walking this path for a while. Below are two versions of the same story — one brief, one deeper. Choose the one that meets you where you are.

Version 1: A Gentle Glimpse

For a long time, I tried to carry my mother's pain as if it were mine to fix. I became numb, detached, and quietly resentful. I didn't know how to help her, and I didn't know how to help myself.

Through DEP-ANON, I began to release those old feelings. I found relief. I made space for love — for my Higher Power — to come in. I now see that I was part of the problem, and that's painful. But it's also the beginning of something new. I can make amends now, not to fix her, but to show up with love and truth.

Version 2: The Deeper Story

For years, I tried to be the reason my mother stayed alive. I carried her pain like it was mine to fix — believing that if I just held on tighter, tried harder, gave more, I could save her. But over time, I stopped seeing her as a person and started treating her like a burden. I wasn't openly hostile — I swallowed those feelings whole. But inside, I was numb to her. Detached. I had become someone who "dealt with" her, not someone who truly saw her.

When she moved away, I felt a strange mix of relief and guilt, and a lot of sadness. And then, through DEP-ANON, something shifted. I began to empty out the old feelings I had clung to for so long — the resentment, the fear, the shame. In that clearing, something sacred happened: my heart opened. I made room for love to come in. For my Higher Power to meet me in the space I had once filled with pain.

I now see that I was a big part of the problem. That my own suffering had blinded me to hers. I made her depression about me, and that's a painful truth to face. But it's also a doorway. Because now, I can begin again. I can make amends not from guilt or desperation, but from love. I can be present for her — because I am finally present for myself. I can now share that presence with others in my life I had been neglecting.

 Affirmation

I am willing to forgive, even when it feels hard.

I honor my pain and my healing.

I am learning to make peace—with myself, with others, and with the past.

STEP 9: FREEDOM –

REPAIRING WHAT WE CAN, RELEASING WHAT WE CAN'T

“Made direct amends to another except when to do so would injure them or others.”

Theme: Courage & Repair

STEP OVERVIEW

In Step 9, we begin the sacred work of repair. This step asks us to make direct amends wherever possible—except when doing so would cause harm. It’s not about fixing others or forcing reconciliation. It’s about taking responsibility for our own healing, acknowledging the impact of our actions, and choosing to move forward with integrity and compassion.

Making amends can be vulnerable. It may stir up fear, grief, or resistance. But it also opens the door to emotional freedom. Whether your amends are accepted or not, the act of showing up honestly is a powerful step toward wholeness.

TRANSITION FROM PREVIOUS STEPS

By now, you’ve walked through the shadows of grief, confusion, and self-discovery. You’ve named your pain, explored your patterns, and begun to understand the impact of depression—not just on your DSO, but on your own heart and spirit.

You’ve faced truths that were hard to hold. You’ve begun to release blame, reclaim boundaries, and reconnect with your own worth. These are not small things. They are acts of courage.

Now, Step 9 invites you into the sacred work of repair.

This step isn’t about fixing what’s broken or forcing reconciliation. It’s about acknowledging the places where harm may have occurred—intentionally or not—and choosing to respond with

integrity, humility, and compassion. Sometimes that means making direct amends. Sometimes it means making peace within yourself.

You may feel unsure. You may feel afraid. That's okay. Step 9 is not a performance—it's a practice. One that honors your growth and opens the door to emotional freedom.

Sidebar: On Courage

Making amends can feel like walking into fire. You may fear rejection, conflict, or causing more harm. That fear is valid—and it means you care deeply.

Step 9 asks for courage, not recklessness. You don't have to rush. You don't have to do it alone.

Let love guide your timing. Let wisdom shape your words. You are not just making amends—you are making peace.

STEP 9 REFLECTION: COURAGE, REPAIR, AND EMOTIONAL FREEDOM

Making amends is not just about words—it's about presence, humility, and the willingness to heal. These questions are here to help you explore what repair means in your life, and how understanding, forgiveness, and emotional freedom can begin to take root.

Take your time. Let your heart lead. Begin where you are.

ON GUILT AND THE POSSIBILITY OF REPAIR

- **Do I still carry guilt about my past relationship with my DSO?**

What memories or emotions still feel unresolved?

- **How does it feel to imagine making amends with my DSO?**

Notice what arises—fear, hope, grief, longing.

- Can I recognize that making amends doesn't mean taking blame, but rather taking responsibility for my own healing?

What does that distinction mean to me?

- What fears arise when I think about making direct amends?

Let yourself name them without judgment.

- Am I willing to accept that some people may not respond the way I hope?

Can I still honor my truth, even without closure?

ON UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION AND ITS IMPACT

As you reflect on guilt and the possibility of repair, consider how your understanding of depression may have shifted your perspective.

- Has my new awareness of the disabling power of depression helped me see my DSO—and myself—with more compassion?

What new insights have softened your view?

- Can I now appreciate how depression affects not only the person suffering, but also those who try to support them?

How has this changed your expectations or boundaries?

- Has this understanding opened me to a new way of seeing each other, beyond blame or resentment?

What does that new lens look like?

- How can I use this new awareness to help repair familial wounds?

What conversations or actions might support healing

ON ROLES, EXPECTATIONS, AND LETTING GO

With this new insight, you may begin to question the roles you've played—and the expectations placed on you.

- **Have I found myself in the role of “rescuer” or “fixer”—either by choice or by expectation?**
What did that role cost me emotionally?
- **Now that I understand more about depression and its dynamics, can I release that role and the burden it carried?**
What would it feel like to step out of that role?
- **Is it possible I've expected too much of myself? Or that others have expected too much of me?**
Where have those expectations led to burnout or resentment?
- **How do I discern when making amends might cause harm, and when silence may be more compassionate?**
What does wise timing look like for me?

ON SELF-AMENDS AND ACCEPTANCE

Ultimately, healing may begin with the courage to make amends with yourself.

- **Is it possible that before making amends with others, I need to make amends with myself?**
What would that look like in practice?
- **Can I truly recognize that there is no one to blame—and that understanding this equips me to move forward?**
How does releasing blame feel in my body?
- **Am I beginning to see that blame may not serve healing—and that compassion can be more powerful?**
What does compassion offer that blame cannot?

- **Can I accept these statements of belief:**

I didn't cause it

I can't control it

I can't cure it

I can cope with it

I can stop contributing to it

A Story of Emotional Freedom

Sometimes, the answers to these questions don't come easily. And sometimes, even when we find clarity, the outcome isn't what we hoped for. Making amends can be met with silence, resistance, or rejection—and yet, healing is still possible. The story below offers a glimpse into what it looks like to make amends with courage, to sit with disappointment, and to find freedom on the other side.

Note:

Every amends journey is unique. Some are met with warmth, others with silence or resistance. The story below reflects one person's experience of making amends that wasn't accepted—but still led to healing. If your path looks different, that's okay. There's no single "right" way to repair. What matters is your courage to show up with honesty, and your willingness to grow—no matter the outcome.

Forgiveness Is for the One Who Forgives

I tried to make amends to my DSO. She's not in recovery and has no plans to be. When I offered my apology, she rejected it outright—called it foolish. She told me my feelings were my problem and shrugged it off.

And yet... it didn't knock me off balance.

It stung, yes. But I could feel, in that moment, that her reaction wasn't personal. I took time to sit with the pain of not getting what I hoped for. I let myself feel the ache of that unmet longing. And then—I moved through it. I didn't get what *I hoped for, yet I got what I needed.*

It's perfectly okay that she's not interested in my amends. What matters is that I came clean. I spoke my truth. I did the hard thing. And now, I wanted to say how sorry I was for not being able to be more with her in her experience, yet there was still a part of me that wanted something *from* her.

She is free to be who she is. And I can love her as she is. That's new for me. That's wonderful.

I've come to understand that my apology doesn't need to be accepted. It was never about changing her—it was about releasing me. I finally understand what people mean when they say forgiveness is for the one who forgives.



TRANSITION PARAGRAPH: FROM STORY TO REFLECTION

Stories like this remind us that healing doesn't always look like reconciliation. Sometimes it looks like standing in your truth, even when no one else meets you there. Step 9 is not about perfection—it's about presence. It's about showing up with honesty, even when the outcome is uncertain.

Let this story be a mirror, not a map. Your journey will be your own. What matters is your willingness to grow, to repair, and to love yourself through it all.



Journaling Invitation: Your Amends Journey

Take a quiet moment to reflect. You might write, draw, or simply sit with these questions in your heart.

- Who might I need to make amends to—and why?
- What would it feel like to speak my truth, even if it's not received?
- What amends do I need to make to myself?

- What does emotional freedom look like for me today?

There's no right answer. Just your truth, unfolding.

When Direct Amends Aren't Possible

A Ritual of Release and Compassion

Sometimes, the person we need to make amends to is no longer in our life.

Sometimes, it's not safe.

Sometimes, the wound is too fresh—or the relationship too fragile.

That's okay.

You can still make amends through intention, prayer, and symbolic release.

Here's one way to do that:

The Letter Ritual

1. **Write a letter** to the person you wish to make amends with.
 - Speak honestly.
 - Acknowledge your part.
 - Express compassion—for them and for yourself.
 - You don't need to send it. This is for your healing.
2. **Pray over the letter** (or meditate, or simply breathe with it).
 - Ask your Higher Power to receive it as an offering.
 - Ask for forgiveness, clarity, and peace.
3. **Release the letter** in a meaningful way:
 - Burn it safely, letting the smoke carry your intention

- Bury it in a garden or forest
- Float it in a river or ocean (using biodegradable paper)
- Tear it into pieces and scatter them in the wind

💛 *This is not about erasing the past. It's about releasing the weight of it. You are allowed to forgive. You are allowed to be free.*

💖 *Affirmation*

I am brave enough to make amends.

I am strong enough to survive rejection.

I am free to love others as they are.

STEP 10: PERSEVERANCE - STAYING AWAKE TO OURSELVES

“Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.”

Theme: Perseverance & Presence

TRANSITION FROM STEP 9

After the vulnerability of Step 9—where we faced the past and made amends—we now turn toward the present. Step 10 is about staying awake to our patterns, our reactions, and our growth. It’s about continuing the work, even when it’s quiet. Even when it’s hard.

This step doesn’t ask for perfection. It asks for perseverance.

Healing isn’t a one-time event—it’s a daily practice. Step 10 invites us to keep showing up, to keep noticing, and to keep choosing integrity over avoidance, compassion over control, and progress over perfection.

STEP OVERVIEW

Step 10 is where recovery becomes a way of life. It’s the practice of self-awareness, accountability, and emotional honesty—woven into our everyday moments. We continue to take personal inventory, not to shame ourselves, but to stay aligned with our values and our healing.

This step helps us catch ourselves before old patterns take root. It teaches us to pause, reflect, and respond with clarity. It reminds us that being wrong isn’t a failure—it’s an invitation to grow.

Perseverance is the heartbeat of Step 10. It’s the quiet courage to keep going, even when no one sees. It’s the strength to admit when we’ve slipped, and the grace to begin again.

REFLECTION: PERSEVERANCE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH A DSO

Living in relationship with someone who struggles with depression can feel like walking through fog: unclear, unpredictable, and often lonely. Perseverance in this context doesn't mean staying in pain—it means staying in integrity. It means continuing to choose self-awareness, compassion, and boundaries, even when the emotional terrain is rough.

These questions invite you to reflect on how perseverance shows up in your relationship with your DSO—and how it can support your healing, not just your endurance.

On Emotional Stamina

- **How do I continue to show up for myself, even when my DSO is emotionally unavailable or dismissive?**

What does self-loyalty look like in those moments?

- **What does perseverance look like when I feel unseen or misunderstood?**

Can I name the emotions that arise—and honor them gently?

- **Have I learned to sit with discomfort instead of rushing to fix it?**

What helps me stay present when things feel unresolved?

- **Can I recognize that staying grounded in my truth is an act of perseverance?**

How does it feel to choose integrity over approval?

On Boundaries and Repetition

- **Have I had to repeat boundaries more than once—and how do I stay consistent without resentment?**

What helps me hold firm while staying kind?

- **What helps me maintain boundaries when my DSO pushes back or ignores them?**

Can I trust myself to protect my peace?

- **How do I persevere in protecting my emotional space, even when guilt or fear arise?**
What inner messages do I need to rewrite?
- **Can I see boundary-setting as a long-term practice, not a one-time event?**
How does that shift my expectations and energy?

On Communication and Silence

- **How do I persevere in communicating clearly, even when my DSO doesn't respond or engage?**
What does it mean to speak my truth without needing a reply?
- **What helps me stay honest without expecting a particular outcome?**
Can I release the need to be understood, and still honor my voice?
- **Have I learned to accept silence or rejection without losing my voice?**
What does emotional resilience look like in those moments?
- **Can I honor my need to be heard, even if my DSO cannot hear me?**
How do I allow myself to feel validated, with the understanding that it is not the responsibility of my DSO or anyone else to do that for me?

On Growth Without Reciprocity

- **How do I continue growing when my DSO isn't changing?**
What does personal progress mean to me now?
- **Can I persevere in my healing without needing my DSO to join me?**
What helps me stay focused on my own path?
- **What does it mean to love someone without losing myself?**
Where do I draw the line between compassion and self-sacrifice?
- **Can I celebrate my progress, even if the relationship remains stagnant?**
What milestones deserve my recognition today?

Step 10 Reflection: Perseverance in Daily Practice

Step 10 is where recovery becomes a rhythm. It's not about dramatic breakthroughs—it's about quiet consistency. We continue to take personal inventory, notice when we've slipped, and make amends promptly. We stay vigilant about our own care, even when our DSO hasn't changed. We persevere—not because it's easy, but because it's healing.

These questions invite you to reflect on how you're showing up for yourself, how you're staying spiritually connected, and how you're practicing emotional accountability day by day.

On Self-Awareness and Accountability

- **Do I act “promptly” when I need to make amends—and to whom?**
What does timely honesty feel like in my body?
- **How do I hold myself accountable for my feelings, behaviors, and actions?**
Can I name my patterns without shame?
- **What steps do I take to maintain my own overall wellness?**
What daily rituals support my healing?
- **Am I dealing with resentment, anger, or guilt as they arise—or am I avoiding them?**
What emotions need my attention today?
- **How do I respond when I realize I've been wrong or reactive?**
Can I offer myself grace and course-correct gently?

On Releasing Control and Refocusing

- **Am I still “white knuckling” and trying to control my DSO?**
What does letting go feel like in practice?
- **Even though my DSO hasn't changed, can I release my attachment to their recovery and keep the focus on myself, daily?**
What helps me stay in my own lane?

- Do I see now that curing someone else is an illusion?
How does that truth shift my energy?
- Even though I'm still concerned about my DSO's progress, is my stress level decreasing?
What signs of peace have I noticed lately?
- I know now it's not up to me to change them—how do I stay grounded in that truth?
What anchors me when I feel pulled toward control?

On Self-Care and Emotional Commitment

- Am I being vigilant about my own care and needs?
What does devotion to self look like today?
- How am I showing up for myself and making self-care a priority?
What choices reflect love toward myself?
- Do I still carry any feelings of selfishness around self-care?
Can I reframe self-care as sacred, not selfish?
- What helps me stay committed to my own wellness, even when it feels hard?
What reminders or rituals keep me grounded?

On Spiritual Growth and Fellowship

- What can I do to be more forgiving of myself and others?
Where does grace need to flow more freely?
- How has the DEP-ANON fellowship helped me take down the blocks that kept me from growing spiritually?
What shifts have I noticed in my spiritual life?
- What can I do to maintain my connection with my Higher Power and keep the focus on myself?
What practices help me feel spiritually supported?

- **Am I showing up for DEP-ANON meetings?**
What does community offer me right now?
- **Am I still working the steps?**
How do I stay engaged with the process?
- **Do I remember to reach out for help, now that I know where it is available?**
What keeps me from asking—and what helps me trust?

 **Closing Meditation for Step 10: Perseverance**

I pause. I breathe. I return to myself.

Today, I do not need to be perfect. I only need to be present.

I notice what I feel, without judgment. I honor what I need, without guilt.

When I stumble, I reach gently for grace. When I react, I choose to reflect.

I release the illusion of control. I release the weight of someone else's healing.

I am responsible for my own peace, my own choices, my own path.

My Higher Power walks with me. I am never alone.

I commit to showing up for myself—today, and again tomorrow.

This is perseverance. This is healing. This is love.

STEP 11: PATIENCE - LISTENING WITHIN – DEEPENING SPIRITUAL

CONNECTION

“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 it out.”

Theme: Patience

TRANSITION FROM STEP 10 TO STEP 11: FROM AWARENESS TO CONNECTION

In Step 10, we learned to stay awake to ourselves—to notice when we’ve drifted, to make amends, and to recommit to our own healing. We practiced perseverance, even when our circumstances didn’t change. We learned to release control and return to self-care.

Now, Step 11 invites us to go deeper—not just into awareness, but into connection.

This step is about seeking—not out of desperation, but out of devotion. It’s about building a relationship with our Higher Power that’s not just reactive, but intentional. Through prayer and meditation, we begin to listen more than we speak. We begin to trust more than we grasp.

Step 11 is not about getting answers—it’s about cultivating spiritual intimacy. It’s about learning to live in alignment, even when the path is unclear.

We move from asking, “What do I need to fix?”

We move from asking, “What do I need to fix?” to asking, “What is my Higher Power guiding me toward?”

 **STEP OVERVIEW**

Step 11 is where recovery becomes spiritual practice. It's not just about asking for help—it's about listening. It's about creating space in our lives for stillness, for guidance, and for the quiet voice of truth that lives beneath the noise.

This step invites us to deepen our conscious contact with our Higher Power—not just in moments of crisis, but in the everyday. Through prayer, meditation, and reflection, we begin to align our will with something greater. We stop grasping for control and start trusting the flow.

 **THEMES OF STEP 11**

- **Spiritual intimacy:** Moving from belief to relationship with a Higher Power
- **Listening:** Cultivating quiet and openness to receive guidance
- **Trust:** Surrendering outcomes and embracing divine timing
- **Practice:** Making prayer and meditation part of daily life
- **Discernment:** Learning to recognize the difference between ego and intuition

 **Sidebar: On Spiritual Listening**

Spiritual connection isn't always loud or obvious. Sometimes it's a whisper. A gut feeling. A moment of clarity. A breath of peace.

You don't have to be perfect at prayer. You don't have to sit cross-legged for hours. You just have to be willing to listen.

Let your practice be simple. Let it be sincere. Let it be yours.

Step 11 Reflection: Listening, Trusting, Waiting

Step 11 invites us to seek—not just answers, but connection. These questions help us explore how prayer and meditation are shaping our spiritual life, how patience is transforming our relationship with our DSO, and how we’re learning to trust the timing of our Higher Power.

On Spiritual Connection and Practice

- **How do I seek conscious contact with my Higher Power each day?**
What rituals or moments help me feel spiritually connected?
- **What does prayer or meditation look like for me right now?**
Is it structured, spontaneous, silent, spoken?
- **Am I creating space to listen—not just speak—in my spiritual practice?**
What helps me quiet the noise and tune in?
- **Do I notice when I’m rushing for answers instead of waiting for guidance?**
What does urgency feel like—and how can I soften it?
- **How do I respond when I feel spiritually disconnected or uncertain?**
Can I offer myself grace in those moments of doubt?

On Trust and Patience with the Process

- **Can I trust that my Higher Power is wholly present and working, even when I don’t see results?**
What helps me stay grounded in faith, not fear?
- **What helps me stay spiritually grounded when progress feels slow?**
Are there practices or people that remind me I’m not alone?
- **How do I practice patience in my recovery journey—especially when I feel stuck?**
What does “waiting well” look like in my life?

- Am I learning to sit with discomfort, rather than trying to fix or escape it?

How do I meet discomfort with compassion?

- What does it mean to me to “wait well”?

Can I trust that healing unfolds in its own time?

On Patience in the Journey with My DSO

- Am I expecting my DSO to change on my timeline—or am I releasing that expectation?

What helps me let go of urgency and control?

- How do I respond when my DSO’s behavior triggers fear, frustration, or urgency?

Can I pause and return to my own center?

- Can I be patient with their journey, while staying committed to my own?

What boundaries support both compassion and self-respect?

- What helps me stay loving without losing myself?

How do I balance empathy with emotional safety?

- Am I praying for their healing—or for the strength to let go?

What does surrender look like in this relationship?

On Growth and Spiritual Discernment

- How do I know when I’m hearing my Higher Power versus my own fear or control?

What does spiritual clarity feel like in my body?

- What spiritual insights have come to me when I’ve been patient and quiet?

Can I name a moment when guidance felt real?

- How is my understanding of “God’s will” evolving?

What beliefs have softened or deepened?

- Am I learning to trust the unfolding of my life, even when it doesn't match my plans?
What helps me stay open to mystery?
- What does spiritual growth look like for me today—not someday?
Can I celebrate the small shifts and quiet miracles?

 *Gentle Reminder for Step 11: The Power of Patience*

You don't need to have all the answers today.

You don't need to feel perfectly connected or spiritually enlightened.

You only need to show up—with openness, with honesty, and with patience.

Your Higher Power is not in a hurry.

Healing unfolds in its own time.

Clarity comes in quiet moments.

Peace often arrives before understanding.

You are not behind. You are not failing.

You are learning to wait well.

You are learning to trust.

 Affirmation for Step 11: I Wait with Grace

Today, I seek connection—not control.

I open my heart to my Higher Power, trusting that I will be guided.

I release urgency and embrace patience.

I do not need to rush healing—mine or anyone else's.

I am learning to wait with grace, to listen with humility, and to trust with courage.

I am held. I am guided. I am growing.

🌟 STEP 12: CHARITY AND LOVE - LIVING THE MESSAGE AND

CARRYING HOPE FORWARD

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry the message to the depressed family member and others and practice these principles in all of our affairs.”

Theme: Service, Fellowship, and Spiritual Growth

🌟 TRANSITION PARAGRAPH FOR STEP 12

After walking through the depths of pain, surrender, and self-discovery, we arrive at Step 12—not as a final destination, but as a beginning. The previous steps have helped us reclaim our voice, restore our boundaries, and reconnect with our inner truth. Now, we are invited to turn outward.

Step 12 is where healing becomes service. It’s where our story becomes a light for others, and our presence becomes a quiet offering of love. We don’t arrive here perfectly healed—we arrive honest, open, and willing. This step asks us to live the message, not just speak it. To carry hope, not just hold it. And to walk beside others, just as others have walked beside us.

🌟 STEP OVERVIEW: LIVING THE MESSAGE

Step 12 is the culmination of the journey. It’s where healing becomes service, and personal growth becomes shared wisdom. We’ve walked through pain, surrender, and transformation—and now we offer what we’ve learned to others.

This step isn’t about preaching. It’s about presence. It’s about showing up with humility, compassion, and authenticity. We carry the message not just in words, but in how we live, how we listen, and how we love.

Practicing these principles in all our affairs means we bring recovery into every part of life—not just meetings, but family, work, and community. It’s a lifelong practice of spiritual integrity.

Charity and Love in Action

“We’re all just walking each other home.” — Ram Dass

“May your path be soft beneath your feet, and may love walk beside you, always.”

Fellowship and Loving Service

- What part does DEP-ANON have in your life today?
- In what ways has my presence in DEP-ANON become a gift to others?
- How do I offer love through listening, sharing, or simply showing up?
- Can I recall a moment when someone’s words in the fellowship touched my heart?
- How do I carry the message of hope and healing to others with gentleness and compassion?
- What does loving service look like in my life today?
- Have I ever shared my story simply to offer love and solidarity?
- How do I respond when someone else is suffering emotionally?

Being of Service Without Losing Myself

- How do I know the difference between helping and rescuing?
- What boundaries help me serve others while still honoring my own needs?
- Have I ever felt burned out from giving too much? What did I learn?
- How do I recharge spiritually so I can keep showing up with love?

Self-Care and Spiritual Integrity

- How important is the DEP-ANON message that we need to take care of ourselves first?

- What spiritual principles guide me when love feels hard to offer?
- How do I show up in relationships with less judgment and more compassion?
- Have I ever apologized to offer grace and take loving responsibility?
- How has humility helped me listen more deeply and love more freely?
- What practices nourish my spirit and keep me open-hearted?

Compassionate Understanding and Shared Recovery

- How has learning more about depression helped me respond to my DSO with compassion?
- Do I trust that my DSO has their own path to healing?
- How has my understanding of recovery become more rooted in love?
- What are some ways I've seen love transform my behavior?

Growing Through Connection

- What have I learned about love from others in the fellowship?
- How do I stay open to receiving love, not just giving it?
- What does it mean to walk someone home emotionally?
- How do I practice love in moments of conflict or misunderstanding?

Sharing the Message

- Has my participation helped other members of the fellowship?
- Share a specific moment when someone's words moved you personally.
- What does it mean to "carry the message" in a way that feels authentic to me?
- How do I respond when someone reaches out for help or understanding?

Practicing the Principles

- What principles have guided me most in my recovery journey?
- How do I practice these principles in my relationships, especially with my DSO?
- What does spiritual integrity look like in my daily life?
- How do I stay grounded in recovery when life gets overwhelming?

Service and Humility

- How has service helped me stay connected to my own healing?
- What fears or hesitations do I have about sharing my story?
- How do I balance helping others with taking care of myself?
- What does humility look like in service?

Integration and Spiritual Awakening

- What does a spiritual awakening feel like in my heart?
- How has it opened me to love more deeply?
- What spiritual principles guide me most in daily life?
- How has my understanding of recovery evolved since I began this journey?
- What does it mean to live the message of DEP-ANON in all my affairs?

Gentle Reminder

You don't have to be perfect to help someone.

You just have to be honest.

Your story matters.

Your healing matters.

Your presence is a gift.

Affirmation

I carry the message with love and humility.

My story is a light for others.

I practice these principles with grace and courage.

I am part of something greater than myself.

 **STEP 12 – PRAYER: WALKING EACH OTHER HOME**

“We’re all just walking each other home.” — Ram Dass

I have walked through shadows and silence, through surrender and grace.

I have faced my fears, laid down my pride, and opened my heart to healing.

*Now, I stand at the threshold of a new way of living—one shaped not by control or despair,
but by charity and love.*

Love that listens without judgment.

Love that gives without needing to be seen.

Love that forgives, not because it forgets, but because it chooses peace.

Love that shows up—again and again—even when it’s hard.

This is the love I carry forward.

This is the message I offer.

This is the life I choose.

May I be a quiet presence in the lives of others.

May I offer kindness without condition, and compassion without agenda.

May I live with integrity, humility, and an open heart.

Let charity guide my hands.

Let love guide my heart.

Let grace guide my steps.

We’re all just walking each other home

 CLOSING CHAPTER: THE JOURNEY CONTINUES**Theme: Vigilance, Renewal, and Ongoing Recovery**

You've completed the twelve steps—but the work is not over. Recovery is not a finish line. It's a rhythm. A practice. A way of living that asks for honesty, humility, and attention.

The steps are not something we graduate from.

They are something we return to—again and again.

In moments of clarity, in seasons of struggle, in quiet days and chaotic ones.

They are here to guide us back to ourselves.

Step 1 may call us again when we feel overwhelmed.

Step 4 may whisper to us when resentment creeps in.

Step 10 may steady us when we lose our footing.

Step 12 may invite us to serve when we feel disconnected.

This is the rhythm of recovery:

We begin again.

Each day.

Each breath.

Each moment we choose love over fear.

Staying Vigilant

Healing asks for vigilance—not fear, but awareness.
It asks us to notice when old patterns return.
To listen when our spirit feels tired.
To pause when we're tempted to fix, rescue, or disappear.
Vigilance is not harsh.
It's loving attention.
It's the quiet discipline of staying awake to our own truth.

Staying Connected

You are not meant to walk this path alone.
DEP-ANON is here—a fellowship of hearts learning to love through the fog of depression.
It is a place to return when you feel lost.
A place to share when you feel full.
A place to listen, to speak, to heal.
Whether you're new or seasoned, weary or strong, DEP-ANON welcomes you.
Your story matters.
Your presence matters.
You are part of something sacred.
Stay in the rooms.
Stay in the rhythm.
Stay in the conversation.
Let the fellowship hold you when you forget how to hold yourself.

 *The Invitation*

Let this work live in your life.

Let it shape your relationships, your choices, your inner dialogue.

Let it be something you revisit—not because you failed, but because you’re growing.

You are not expected to be perfect.

You are invited to be present.

To be honest.

To be willing.

The steps are here for you—today, tomorrow, and every time you need to begin again.

And DEP-ANON is here, too.

A place to return.

A place to belong.

A place to walk each other home.

 *Closing Letter from the DEP-ANON Fellowship*

Dear Friend,

You've walked through these pages with courage. You've reflected, released, and reached inward. You've faced truths that were heavy, and honored emotions that were long buried. That is no small thing.

Whether you completed every step or simply found one moment of clarity, your journey matters. Healing is not a straight line—it's a sacred unfolding. And you've begun.

You may still be walking alongside someone who struggles with depression. Their path may be uncertain. But now, you carry tools. You carry insight. You carry the quiet strength of someone who has chosen to heal without losing themselves.

You've learned that:

- *You are not responsible for someone else's illness*
- *You can set boundaries without guilt*
- *You can care without carrying*
- *You can love without abandoning yourself*

You've also learned that you are not alone.

DEP-ANON is more than a workbook. It's a fellowship, a spiritual refuge, a reminder that your pain is seen and your healing is possible. We hope you'll continue to walk with us—in meetings, in reflection, in community.

As you close this chapter, may you carry forward:

- *Peace in your spirit*
- *Clarity in your mind*
- *Compassion in your heart*
- *And the quiet knowing: You are worthy of joy.*

We are so proud of you.

We are so grateful for you.

And we are always here.

With love and light,

Your DEP-ANON Fellowship

APPENDIX A - TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

Tools for Self-Care

Restoring Yourself While Supporting Someone Else

You've spent so much time caring for someone else.

Now it's time to care for you.

Self-care isn't selfish—it's survival. It's how you stay grounded, how you reconnect with your own identity, and how you begin to heal. This section offers practical, emotional, and spiritual tools to help you refill your cup, one drop at a time.

You don't have to do everything. Just start somewhere.

How to Use These Tools

These tools are here to support *your* healing. You don't have to use all of them, and you don't have to use them in order. Some may speak to you now; others may become useful later. There's no right way to recover—only your way.

You might use these tools in solitude, in meetings, with a sponsor, or in conversation with a trusted friend. However you choose to engage, let it be gentle, honest, and rooted in self-compassion.

TOOL 1: BOUNDARY-SETTING REFLECTION

Purpose: To help you identify where you need emotional, relational, or physical boundaries—and how to honor them without guilt.

 Prompts:

- Where in my life do I feel overextended, resentful, or unsafe?
- What behaviors or patterns do I tolerate that leave me drained?
- What boundary would protect my peace—even if it feels uncomfortable to set?
- What fears come up when I imagine enforcing that boundary?

 *Practice:*

Write a boundary you'd like to set. Then write a compassionate statement to yourself affirming that boundary.

Example: "I will not respond to texts after 9 p.m. I deserve rest, and I am not responsible for managing someone else's crisis at all hours."

TOOL 2: SELF-CARE PLANNING TEMPLATE

Purpose: To help you reconnect with your own needs and create sustainable rhythms of care.

CATEGORIES TO EXPLORE:

Emotional Self-Care

- **Name your feelings:** Journaling, therapy, or talking with someone safe
- **Validate your experience:** You're allowed to feel what you feel
- **Release guilt:** You can love someone and still need space
- **Practice self-compassion:** Speak to yourself like you would a friend

Physical Self-Care

- **Rest:** Sleep is not a luxury—it's a necessity
- **Movement:** Gentle walks, stretching, or dancing to music you love
- **Nutrition:** Nourish your body with food that fuels you
- **Breathwork:** Deep breathing to calm your nervous system

Mental Self-Care

- **Set boundaries:** Say no when you need to
- **Limit overthinking:** Use grounding techniques to stay present
- **Take breaks from caregiving:** Even short ones matter
- **Engage your mind:** Read, learn, or create something just for you

 *Spiritual Self-Care*

- **Meditation or prayer:** Connect with your Higher Power or inner wisdom
- **Nature:** Spend time outdoors to reset your spirit
- **Rituals:** Light a candle, write a letter, create a moment of peace
- **Gratitude:** Name one thing each day that reminds you life is still beautiful

 WEEKLY PLANNER:

Day	One Thing I'll Do to Care for Myself
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Monday	
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Tuesday	
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Wednesday	
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Thursday	
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Friday	
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Saturday	
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Sunday	
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Tip: Start small. One act of care per day is enough.

TOOL 3: COMMUNICATION SCRIPTS

Purpose: To help you express your needs, limits, and feelings with clarity and compassion.

 Sample Phrases:

- “I care about you deeply, and I also need space to care for myself.”
- “I’m not able to talk right now, but I’m thinking of you.”
- “I feel overwhelmed, and I need to step back for a bit.”
- “I’m learning to set boundaries—not to punish you, but to protect my own well-being.”

These phrases are starting points. Adapt them to your voice and situation.

TOOL 4: JOURNALING PROMPTS FOR ONGOING REFLECTION

Purpose: To support emotional clarity and self-awareness.

 Prompts:

- What am I feeling today, and where do I feel it in my body?
- What am I carrying that doesn’t belong to me?
- What does peace look like for me right now?
- What am I afraid to say—and why?
- What do I need more of? What do I need less of?

TOOL 5: SUPPORT GROUP GUIDE

Purpose: To help you find or start a DEP-ANON meeting or connect with others in recovery.

Suggestions:

- Ask your sponsor or fellowship contacts about starting a local or virtual group and about joining the Dep-Anon What's App Chat Group.
- Consider starting a small study group using this workbook, or the DEP-ANON Manual.
- Remember: You don't have to do this alone
- Look for new *DEP-ANON Family and Friends Community Website, TBD

TOOL 6: EMERGENCY SELF-COMPASSION KIT

Purpose: For moments of overwhelm, panic, or emotional collapse.

Quick Practices:

- **Breathe:** Inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 6. Repeat.
- **Ground:** Name 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, 1 you can taste.
- **Affirm:** "I am safe. I am allowed to rest. I am not responsible for fixing everything."
- **Connect:** Text a trusted friend or attend a meeting—even if you don't speak. Join and participate in the Dep-Anon What's App Chat Group.

Keep a physical kit if helpful: a calming scent, a photo, a quote, a soft object, a reminder of your strength.

TOOL 7: NATURE AS MEDICINE

Purpose: To reconnect with the world beyond your pain and find grounding in something larger than yourself.

Why It Helps:

- Nature offers quiet, beauty, and perspective
- It reminds us we are part of something cyclical and resilient
- It can soothe nervous system overwhelm and emotional fatigue

Practices:

- Take a walk without headphones—just listen
- Sit under a tree and breathe deeply for five minutes
- Watch the sky change, the leaves move, the water ripple
- Keep a “nature journal” with sketches, thoughts, or photos

You don’t have to hike a mountain. Even a patch of grass or a window view can be healing.

TOOL 8: MEDITATION & MINDFULNESS

Purpose: To cultivate inner stillness, observe your thoughts without judgment, and create space between reaction and response.

Simple Practices:

- **Breath Awareness:** Sit quietly and notice your breath. When your mind wanders, gently return.
- **Body Scan:** Lie down and bring attention to each part of your body, noticing tension or ease.
- **Loving-Kindness:** Silently repeat: “May I be safe. May I be well. May I be free from suffering.”

- **Guided Meditations:** Use apps like Insight Timer, Headspace, or YouTube for support

 Tips:

- Start with 2–5 minutes a day
- You don't need to "clear your mind"—just notice
- Meditation is a practice, not a performance

Meditation doesn't erase pain, but it helps you hold it with more grace.

TOOL 9: TOOL OF RECOVERY: POSITIVE REMINISCING

Honoring Joy Without Denial

Sometimes healing means remembering.

Not to escape the present—but to reconnect with the light that once lived in us.

This tool invites you to recall a moment of joy from your past.

Not to compare or grieve—but to honor your capacity for feeling, connection, and meaning.

 *You don't have to be happy to remember happiness. You don't have to be cheerful to feel grateful. Gratitude is not a performance—it's a quiet noticing.*

Try This:

- Close your eyes and recall a moment of joy
- Write about what you felt, saw, heard, or held
- Let yourself feel whatever arises—grief, warmth, longing, peace
- Ask: *What does this memory remind me about myself? What strength or love lived in me then?*

TOOL 10: GRATITUDE WITH EMOTIONAL HONESTY

Honoring What's Good Without Ignoring What's Hard

Gratitude is powerful—but only when it's real.

You don't have to feel grateful *instead of* sad, overwhelmed, or angry.

You're allowed to feel both.

Sometimes gratitude is quiet.

Sometimes it's layered with grief.

Sometimes it's hard to find—and that's okay.

 *True gratitude grows alongside truth—not at the expense of it.*

This page invites you to explore gratitude with emotional honesty.

Let yourself name what's good, even if it's messy.

Let yourself feel what's hard, even as you notice what's still holding you.

Journaling Prompts

- What am I grateful for today—even if it's imperfect or bittersweet?
- What emotions am I holding alongside gratitude?
- What does it feel like to be honest and grateful at the same time?
- What small moment, memory, or gesture reminded me of my strength or connection?

TOOL 11: DAILY RITUALS TRACKER

Purpose: To create rhythm, stability, and intentional moments of connection with yourself each day.

 Why Rituals Matter:

- They offer predictability in uncertain times
- They help you reconnect with your body, breath, and values
- They can be sacred, simple, or playful—whatever you need

 *Suggested Rituals:*

Morning	Midday	Evening
Drink water slowly and mindfully	Step outside for fresh air	Light a candle or dim the lights
Stretch or move your body	Pause for 3 deep breaths	Write one sentence in your journal
Set an intention for the day	Listen to calming music	Say a loving-kindness phrase
Read a quote or affirmation	Eat one meal without distractions	Reflect on one thing you're grateful for

You don't have to do all of these. Pick 1–2 that feel nourishing and repeat them daily.

 WEEKLY RITUAL TRACKER

Day	Morning Ritual	Midday Ritual	Evening Ritual	Notes / Feelings
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Monday				
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Tuesday				
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Wednesday				
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Thursday				
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Friday				
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Saturday				
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Sunday				
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Use this page to notice patterns, celebrate consistency, and gently recommit when you drift.

TOOL 12: MANTRAS FOR RECOVERY

Purpose: To offer simple, repeatable phrases that calm the nervous system, affirm your worth, and anchor you in the present.

How to Use Them:

- Repeat silently or aloud during meditation
- Write one on a sticky note and place it where you'll see it
- Use as journal prompts or breath anchors
- Whisper them to yourself in moments of distress

MANTRAS TO TRY

Grounding

- "I am here. I am safe. I am allowed to rest."
- "This moment is enough."
- "I am rooted like the trees. I bend, but I do not break."

Self-Compassion

- "I am learning. I am healing. I am worthy."
- "I offer myself the kindness I give to others."
- "I am not my past. I am not my pain."

 *Boundaries & Strength*

- “No is a complete sentence.”
- “I protect my peace without apology.”
- “I do not have to explain my healing.”

 *Surrender & Trust*

- “I release what I cannot carry.”
- “I trust the process, even when I don’t understand it.”
- “I am held by something greater than my fear.”

 *Create Your Own Mantra*

Use this space to write a mantra that speaks directly to your heart:

My mantra: _____

Tip: Keep it short, present-tense, and emotionally resonant. You’ll know it’s right when it feels like a balm.