**Step 2: Finding Hope**

*“I came to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity.”*

This assignment is designed to help you work Step 2. If you have already worked Step 2 with your sponsor, please use this handout to record the work you did then.

 Do you need to be restored to sanity? If you’re like most people, it was difficult enough to accept that you were powerless in Step 1. Now this next step is calling you crazy, too! Think about it—how could anything *restore* you to sanity unless you had lost your sanity to start with? And yet this can be a great source of hope.

 With Step 1 and the realization that you are powerless over things that could kill you or ruin your life, you face a terrible situation. Most addicts and alcoholics already knew inside that they were out of control—“that our lives had become unmanageable”—and that may have caused them a lot of depression and anxiety. If they had to stay stuck at that point, the future would be very dark.

 However, Step 2 says that being powerless doesn’t mean your life has to *stay* out of control. You may find happiness and peace through “a power greater than ourselves.” That’s why many people call this the “hope step.”

1. Do you feel your life has been insane? What does *sanity* mean to you?
2. What do you think of the idea of a Higher Power?
3. What experiences have you had that have led you to this view of a Higher Power?
4. How have you tried to make your life more sane than it was? How well did your efforts work?
5. If your life has been out of control, and you’ve tried to straighten it out but couldn’t, can you believe that a power greater than you could do this?   Would you want this to happen?
6. Here are some alternatives to the idea that a Higher Power could restore us to sanity. If one of these fits your beliefs better, please circle that letter.

a. My life is not insane at all; I am in control and things are the way I want them to be.

b. My life is insane but I can straighten things out myself.

c. My life is insane but there is nothing either I or any Higher Power can do about it.

7. What would you have to gain and to lose if it were true that there was a Higher Power that could create the order in your life that you may have wanted but been unable to produce?

 What I would have to gain:

 What I would have to lose:

8.   If you are unable to believe in the idea of a Higher Power that can make your life better, do you wish you could believe it? How would it change things if there were such a Higher Power?

9.   Think of your sponsor or other people from your 12-step program that you like and respect. Have you talked about the Higher Power with these people? What were their views?

10.  Have you heard a different explanation of God or a Higher Power that made sense to you? In general, what was it?

11.  Think about a Higher Power or God that would be good and would make sense to you but

 would fit this world where bad things happen to good people. If you can imagine such a Higher

 Power or God, what would that Power be like?

12. If you have trouble believing in God, would it make a difference if you experienced an event

 or a feeling of having a Higher Power present? If you imagined a good version of a Higher

 Power that would make sense to you, how would that Power affect people’s lives?

13. If such a Higher Power existed, how would you personally be able to tell? How would you

 see evidence of that Power’s actions? Would there be things to notice? What would they be?

14. How would your life be affected if there was a Higher Power doing the kinds of things in your

 life that the 12-step programs describe?

15. What would have to happen or what would you have to see for you to believe there was a

 Higher Power trying to help you?

16.  Look back over your life and think about whether you have had experiences where a Higher Power may have been helping you. What happened, and how have you explained it to yourself?

17.  If you find yourself unable to definitely believe in the idea of a Higher Power, can you think of it as an unanswered question, with an open mind? What does it feel like to admit that it is at least possible? Does this cause you to feel any hope, or fear, or both?

Be sure to bring this handout to your next session with your therapist and talk about your

thoughts, and feelings about the exercise.