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“Tools and Jewels” Media Addicts Anonymous Meeting

Wednesday 7:45 PM EST

Notes to Moderator: *On 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, there is a 10-minute spot talk. It is recommended that you ask someone ahead of time to be your spot talk speaker. If your speaker does not show up, you can talk or you can hold a literature meeting. Please make sure you are on the line at least 5 minutes before the meeting starts. Please read the script as is and please keep the meeting clipping along so we have more time for shares. Please be sure to write down everyone's name who volunteers for service during the meeting so you can thank them at the end and so it is easier to keep track of who your readers are.*

IMPORTANT: *We use ONLY conference approved MAA and AA literature. Moderator, there is a PDF of the AA Big Book on the website next to this meeting format. If you choose a reading from the Big Book, members can read from the PDF or from the Big Book directly. The page numbers are the same.*

Greeting: Welcome to the one-hour "Tools and Jewels" meeting of Media Addicts Anonymous where we focus on recovery tools; the reading of “gems” from our literature and hear from “sparkling” recovery speakers. My name is _____, and I am a recovering member of MAA. I will be your moderator for today. At any time during the meeting, you may press Star (*) 6 to mute or un-mute your phone.

Serenity Prayer: Please un-mute your phone now and join me in the "We Version" of the Serenity Prayer.

*God, grant US the serenity to accept the things WE cannot change,
courage to change the things WE can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

Preamble: Media Addicts Anonymous is an international fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, and hope, come together to find relief and recovery from media addiction. We welcome everyone who wants to stop using media compulsively.

There are no dues or fees for membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. MAA as a whole is not affiliated with any public or private organization. We have no opinions on outside issues, especially those concerning media. We neither endorse nor oppose any causes, political views, ideology, or religious doctrine.

We support all forms of media sobriety, including abstinence from electronic media, films, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, and music. We use AA's 12 steps and 12 traditions as our program

of recovery and utilize the tools of MAA to clarify compulsive, obsessive, or destructive media-related behaviors and to develop strategies to improve our general quality of life. Our primary purpose is to abstain from personal addictive media one day at a time and to carry the message of recovery to other media addicts who still suffer.

Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions: MAA utilizes the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, first developed by Alcoholics Anonymous, to recover from media addiction. Please go to MAA's website to download the readings for this meeting www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org. They can be found on the Meetings page. You will need these PDFs to be a reader today. If you have a Big Book please have it available to read or you can find the Big Book on the MAA website under "Meetings" next to the Wednesday Tools meeting format.

Welcome Newcomers: Speaking of real jewels, are there any newcomers to this meeting? If so, know that to us, you are the most important person here. Please press Star (*) 6 to un-mute yourself and state your name and, if you feel comfortable, your location so we can welcome you. (Pause and wait for newcomers to respond.) It is suggested you attend at least six meetings so that you have time to identify with the speakers, begin to absorb the concepts, and learn more about the program.

Who would be willing to serve as newcomer greeter after the close of the meeting? (If no one responds, ask again in 50 minutes during the Wrap Up.)

Meeting Focus: This Media Addicts Anonymous meeting focuses on the Tools of Media Addiction and on priceless readings from conference approved literature of Alcoholics Anonymous which we apply to our media addiction. We suggest as you listen to this meeting you put away all devices you don't need right now and pay attention to all that is being said. By focusing on this meeting alone without distraction you will get this program much faster.

Readings: I need volunteers to be readers for this meeting. Who would like to give service by reading today? I will take 3 names.

_____ (name) will you please read the Twelve Steps of Media Addicts Anonymous?

The Twelve Steps of Media Addicts Anonymous

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

1. We admitted we were powerless over media—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. 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 that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other media addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. (Pass)

Moderator: Thank you. I will now read the Tradition of the Month and the 12th Tradition.
The Twelve Traditions of Media Addicts Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon MAA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving Higher Power that may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for MAA membership is a desire to stop compulsively using media.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or MAA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the media addict who still suffers.
6. An MAA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the MAA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every MAA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Media Addicts Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. MAA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Media Addicts Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the MAA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Moderator: Media Addiction as a Disease of Mind and Body

We of Media Addicts Anonymous view media addiction as an illness similar to alcoholism. Like drugs and alcohol, media addiction is both a physical and mental disease. The over-use of media destabilizes the area of the brain responsible for remembering details, planning, and prioritizing tasks. When we compulsively use media, our frontal lobes go "off-line," weakening our ability to stop using media once we start. Media also affects the pleasure center of the brain triggering a release of dopamine. Like drug addiction, more and more media is needed to induce the same pleasurable dopamine hit, eventually creating a dependency. Because of these two mental and physical responses, media addicts have little or no defense against the first click. Therefore, we see media as a mind altering and mood-altering drug. Media becomes our dopamine high or our dope.

We have found that when we compulsively binged on media for relief, reward, relaxation, recreation, and as a replacement for relationships, we ended up feeling remorse and regret. We call these the "7 R's of Media Insanity." We are here today to counter this insanity with another "R": the "R of Recovery".

Here is a list of The Signs and Symptoms of Media Addiction. See where you can identify.

_____ (name) will you please read The Signs and Symptoms of Media Addiction?

The Signs and Symptoms of Media Addiction

1. **Dissatisfaction with life**— We depend on media for relief from our pain and problems. Media is our main source of relaxation, recreation, reward and relationship and we feel bored and empty when not using.
2. **Time irreverence**— Electronic media distracts us from our goals as it takes priority over everything else. When bingeing or grazing we lose track of time and forget what is important.
3. **Exhibiting risky behavior**—We endanger our life or other people's lives to get our media fix. We may drive while sending text messages, overeat while bingeing on TV or deprive ourselves of sleep while gaming.
4. **Mental obsession**— We are preoccupied with the news, social media etc., and so we want our devices with us at all times. We have a fear-of-missing-out.
5. **Isolation**— We prefer to stay indoors on media rather than outdoors in nature or socializing. Even in the company of others we don't interact but lose ourselves in our devices, which makes us feel lonely and remorseful.

6. **Compare and despair**—Through our media use we compare ourselves with others and may create an online persona we think people will like and respect. Unable to live up to this ideal version of ourselves we end up in despair.
7. **Avoidance of work and inability to plan and prioritize tasks**— Because we use our time to be on media we procrastinate on necessary tasks and thus jeopardize the success of our education, work etc. Poor time management may lead to a crisis, often followed by a new binge.
8. **Obsession with fantasy**—Our need for romance and sex is increasingly satisfied through fantasy, as presented by media. We lose the ability to have real relationships because of unrealistic expectations. We become dissatisfied, feel disconnected and lonely.
9. **Depression, shame, and dishonesty**—Depressed and ashamed we lie about our media consumption. We tell ourselves we want to change our lives, but we don't know how to live without our electronic media. Some of us have suicidal thoughts.
10. **Disconnection from our bodies and nature**—We fail to meet our basic needs for rest, sleep, exercise, good nutrition, etc. We avoid the natural world and do not fully enjoy our senses.
11. **Withdrawal and inability to stop**—When we stop using media, we experience withdrawal symptoms such as cravings and agitation. We can't stay stopped and after giving in to our alcoholic media, we find it even harder to try to stop again.
12. **Physical ailments**—Our prolonged media use leads to backache, neck pain, headaches, disturbed sleep, carpal tunnel syndrome, as well as problems with our vision. (Pass)

Moderator: If you identify with at least 5 of these signs of media addiction, you may be a media addict. You are in the right place. You are not alone, you are one of us, and you matter. Besides working the Twelve Steps as explained in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, we also apply the following tools to help create and maintain a strong media recovery program. We will be reading the short version of MAA's tools. Please go to the literature page of our website for more detailed information on how to work these tools at www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org.

_____ (name) could you please read the Twelve Tools of Media Addicts Anonymous

The Twelve Tools of Media Addicts Anonymous

1. **Meetings**—Meetings are a place we learn about our addiction. We stop isolating and gather with others who want to recover from media addiction.

2. **Sponsorship**—A sponsor is a media-sober member of MAA who has taken all Twelve Steps and is living the Steps and Traditions to the best of their ability. We ask a sponsor to guide us through the Twelve Steps of Recovery and help us create and use our media sobriety plan.
3. **Media Awareness and Trigger Identification**—We work closely with our sponsor to discover what behaviors trigger the “phenomenon of craving”. These are the things that cause us to be out of control and compulsively use electronic media.
4. **Media Fasting**—We recommend fasting from any unnecessary media for a period of time. This helps us see our compulsion more clearly, start to break the cycle, and connect to ourselves and others in deeper and healthier ways.
5. **Media Sobriety Plan**—We make A “Media Sobriety Plan” to help us define what, when, how, where, and why we use our devices.
6. **Media Replacement Plan**—We make a Media Replacement Plan so that we will have enjoyable and healthy activities to replace media.
7. **Media Withdrawal Plan**—We make a Media Withdrawal Plan to help us cope with the moodiness, anxiety, boredom and agitation etc that we may feel when we stop using media. "Sobriety Action Partners," "Sobriety Action Meetings," out-reach calls, tracking urges and asking Higher Power to remove the obsession are a few of the strategies we include.
8. **Daily Body Care Awareness and Adequate Sleep**— We set a media curfew for ourselves and a regular bedtime, and we try to keep electronic media out of the bedroom. During the day we eat nourishing food and get proper exercise and fresh air.
9. **Meditation**—We regularly take time to meditate, to feed our spirits in ways that electronic media never could.
10. **Literature**—We read the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and other Twelve Step literature to reinforce our understanding of addiction and how to recover.
11. **Writing**—We write daily to help us gain a wider perspective on our difficulties and our disease.
12. **Service**—Carrying the message to the media addict who still suffers is the basic purpose of our Fellowship. Any form of service, no matter how small, which helps reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. (Pass)

Timekeeper: Who will be our timekeeper for today? _____

Speaker: (1st and 3rd Wednesdays)

(If a speaker HAS been chosen before the meeting):

Today, the “jewel” who has volunteered to give our spot talk is, _____. Welcome, _____. You have 10 minutes to qualify, sharing your experience, strength and hope. Timekeeper, please let them know when 8 minutes are up and when their time has ended.

-OR-

(If a speaker HAS NOT been chosen before the meeting)

Spot Talk: It is time for us to hear a short talk from someone who is sober in MAA and has fasted for at least one month from using all unnecessary media. They do not have to be fasting at this time, but have fasted for at least a month. Who would be willing to be our “jewel” and give service by sharing their experience, strength, and hope in MAA or on any of the Symptoms or Tools? *(pause)* _____. Thank you.

Timekeeper, can you time for 10 minutes and give them a notification at 8 minutes and again when time is up. Thank you.

(after talk): Thank you so much for sharing with us.

-OR-

Reading: (2nd, 4th and 5th Wednesdays)

We will now read a few gems in the literature of Alcoholics Anonymous and share on them. Today's reading is on page _____ in the _____ book. *(Either read yourself, or if in the Big Book ask for readers.)* I will take three names for reading. *(have readers read selection)*

Thank you all for reading.

-CONTINUE-

Open Sharing: We will now open the meeting for sharing. When you share, please tell us your name and, if you're comfortable, your location. This helps to facilitate connection and outreach. We ask members to focus sharing on what has been shared and the symptoms and tools of recovery from media addiction. Again, the tools are: Meetings, Sponsorship, Trigger Identification, A Media Fast, Sobriety Plan, Media Replacement Plan, Media Withdrawal Plan, Body Care and Sleep, Meditation, Literature, Writing and Service. Please do not engage in cross talk such as interrupting, directly addressing another speaker, commenting on someone else's share, giving advice, or making suggestions or naming media titles or discussing the specific content of your addictive media. Allow the moderator to address all interruptions or issues.

Timekeeper, will you please let the person sharing know when two minutes are up and again at three minutes when their share has ended? (*If there are fewer people in the meeting, shares can be 4 minutes.*) I will take three names to begin with. Who would like to speak? _____ Please press Star (*) 6 to un-mute yourself.

Wrap Up at 50 minutes: That's all the time we have for sharing today. Thank you all for sharing your "gems of wisdom." If you did not have a chance to share you can share during the fellowship time after we close unless it is the last Wednesday of the week when we will have a group business meeting.

(*If no one has already volunteered to be newcomer greeter, ask*) Who would be willing to serve as newcomer greeter after the close of this meeting? I'd like to thank _____ for their spot talk, to _____ for keeping time; _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____ for doing the readings; _____ for being our dashboard operator, and _____ for being our newcomer greeter. Again, I'm _____. Thank you for letting me serve today as your moderator.

Seventh Tradition: It is now time for the 7th Tradition and announcements. MAA has no dues or fees. We are self-supporting through our own contributions, which are for the development of MAA literature, costs incurred by the General Service Board, and the maintenance of the website at www.mediaadictsanonymous.org. Contributions can be made via PayPal on the MAA website. Please give what you can, and if you can give nothing at this time, keep coming back because you are more important than your money.

Announcements: Please check our MAA website for more meeting times. Are there any MAA related announcements?

The Promises: Who would be willing to read this gem; the Promises from page 83 in the Big Book? (*or read them yourself*)

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations, which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them. (Pass)

Number Exchange: If you want to contact someone you heard on today's meeting, please call out their names now and we ask those members to stay on the call, if they are able, until after the closing for the exchange of numbers. Is there anyone who wants someone's number?

Closing: In closing, the opinions expressed here today are strictly those of the individuals who gave them. The things we have heard here are spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. We do not take outside the meeting whom we hear at the meeting. If we try to absorb what we have heard, we are bound to gain a better understanding of the way to handle our problems and begin to change our lives. Let us talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, and let there be no gossip or criticism of one another, but only Love, Understanding, and Fellowship.

Closing Prayer: Please un-mute your phone by pressing Star (*) 6 and will all who care to join me in saying the in the "We Version" of the Serenity Prayer.

*God, grant US the serenity to accept the things WE cannot change,
courage to change the things WE can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

Thank you everyone for a great meeting. Are there any non-MAA related announcements?

I will now facilitate the phone number exchange for the next 5 minutes. Timekeeper, please let us know when 5 minutes are up. Please say your phone number one time, slowly and clearly, along with your time zone, which I will then repeat to the group. Also, please let us know if you are available to sponsor, if you need a sponsor or an action partner, or if you just want to leave your number for outreach. First, we have _____; your number was requested. *(Repeat until all requested numbers are given or 5 minutes have ended, whichever comes first.)*

(After 5 minutes): I will now turn the meeting over to our Newcomer Greeter _____