

A.R.T.S. Step Seven Workshop Agenda

Note: The suggested timing adds up to about 2 hours and 30 minutes.

Opening

Leader/Facilitator: Welcome everyone. My name is _____ and I am a _____. I will be leading this workshop today. Also serving today are:

(Tech person and any others helping to run the workshop introduce themselves.)

Thank you for participating in today's workshop on Step Seven. This is an opportunity for more intensive study than you might experience in a meeting. The workshop is designed to go for about 2 ½ hours with a ten-minute break.

The Twelve Steps of A.R.T.S. Anonymous are the program of recovery. The book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, where the Twelve Steps first appear, states, "Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery." Through the Twelve Steps it is possible to dismantle and move through the blocks that prevent us from fully engaging in our creative expression. It is possible to find freedom from what holds us back.

We invite those who participate in these workshops to share them with others. The scripts are available on the artsanonymous.org website. By sharing experience, strength and hope, all who participate benefit. It is also possible that those who submit writing to the Literature Committee could have it included in future A.R.T.S. Literature.

All who wish to join me, let's begin with the Serenity Prayer.

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

We will now read the Steps of A.R.T.S. Anonymous. Are there volunteers willing to help read?

(Tech screenshares the Twelve Steps of A.R.T.S. Anonymous)

Leader/Facilitator: I will now give a brief overview of today's workshop.

-We will have a speaker for about 7-10 minutes.

-This will be followed by introductions.

-We will then present questions for writing on Step Seven.

-Writing for about 20 minutes, followed by a ten-minute break.

-Then we will go into breakout rooms to share in a small group.

-When we come out of the Breakout rooms there will be some additional questions for about 10 more minutes of writing.

-After that we will have an open sharing of what people wrote, or what they wish to share about the Step, or their experience at today's workshop.

Are there any questions before we go on? Much of this will become clearer as we go.

Speaker

Leader/Facilitator: Please allow me to introduce the Speaker for today, _____, who will share personal experience, strength and hope on Step Seven.

(Allow up to 10 minutes for the Speaker. Tech gives a warning of time remaining if the Speaker wants it)

Leader/Facilitator: Thank you_____.

Round Robin/Introductions

We will now go into a round robin session. In one minute or less, please introduce yourself by your first name and your art, what you hope to get from the workshop today, or anything you wish to say about what you just heard from the speaker. I will go in the order of who I see on the screen until everyone has had their minute.

(Up to 20 minutes; it depends on the number present. Tech times)

Questions and Writing

Leader/Facilitator:

Step 7: Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings

With Step Seven we may feel we are at a threshold. We have taken some action to accept the power and grace of a Higher Power, and to learn more about ourselves and who we are. Now we ask for help from God to remove what no longer serves us. This can involve faith, trust, and a willingness to form a partnership with a Higher Power.

If we found an inability to change our behavior through our own self-will, we may have learned something about what it is to be humble. To humbly ask is not the same as being submissive or making ourselves less than we are; it can be the willingness to accept help from a Higher Power. Humility can strengthen, empower and encourage us to let God remove our shortcomings. By now, it may be possible to trust that all we need to do is simply ask God.

With the word "shortcomings" we can ask a Higher Power to show us where we are falling short. This opens the possibility that we can step into our potential instead. Can we meet the will of a Higher Power who sees all of who we are and the best that we have to give? When we expand ourselves beyond our shortcomings,

sometimes changes are made that can lead us to a fuller expression of our creative potential.

Although any changes made to address our shortcomings might seem good to us, there can be feelings of fear and doubt. We can feel there are times when we want to “take it back”. We might want to hang on to what worked well in the past and may be afraid to let go. We don’t always know which of our character defects are perhaps still useful in some way. A Higher Power can decide the time and place. Our job is to apply what we are learning about ourselves and see the change in our art and our lives. We likely will continue to make mistakes, finding ourselves falling into old behaviors and attitudes. And yet we can be gentle with ourselves and again ask for help in finding a new way.

(Tech screen shares Step Seven and the two sets of questions below)

Step Seven: Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

Experience: What does Step Seven mean to me?

- What does “humbly ask God” mean to me?
- What are some things I might “humbly ask” for?
- Are there areas in my life where I may be falling short of my Higher Power’s will for me?
- What changes can I imagine taking place if I let go and let God?

Strength: How do I feel about Step Seven?

- What might it feel like to approach a Higher Power and ask to have my shortcomings removed?
- If God decides how and when shortcomings are removed, how do I feel about that?
- What might be the doubts or fears that arise as I consider God’s power to remove my shortcomings?

- How might the idea that “God knows and sees all we have done in our lives, and loves us anyway” help?

Leader/Facilitator: These questions are offered as prompts to choose from for writing on Step Seven. The questions are loosely divided by an emphasis on what we think and how we feel. They are optional, and you may have other ways to explore Step Seven.

Is there a volunteer willing to read the questions aloud?

Are there any questions before we begin writing?

(Allow 20 minutes to write. Tech times)

Break

Leader/Facilitator: We will now take a 10-minute break. Please everyone, mute yourself. If you are doing anything distracting, please turn off your video. Some of you may wish to continue writing during this time. We will all come back together at _____ o'clock.

(Break for 10 minutes. Tech times)

Breakout Rooms

Leader/Facilitator: Welcome back everyone. Some of you may feel you have things to talk about. We will now be putting everyone into a breakout room of 4-5 people for sharing on the Step for about 25-30 minutes. There are suggested guidelines and a format for the breakout rooms posted in the chat. Breakout rooms will be given a 5-minute warning before closing.

(Tech person first puts the breakout room format and guidelines below in the chat. They then assign and open the breakout rooms. Use the "broadcast" feature to give a warning for when the breakout rooms will close)

Breakout Room Format:

- Everyone briefly introduces themselves by their name and art
- The group selects a volunteer to read the guidelines
- The group selects a volunteer to be the Timer
- The group decides how much time to give each person to share, and may include a warning for when time is up

Guidelines:

- Each participant may share their writing or what they are learning about the Step
- Please mute your microphone while others are sharing or reading
- Please avoid engaging in crosstalk or asking questions about what another is sharing

Final Questions and More Writing

Leader/Facilitator: Welcome back, everyone. A final set of questions will now be introduced to explore the hope that can be found in this Step. You have the option to use any one or all of these questions, or another question. Is there a volunteer to read the questions?

(Tech person screenshares the set of questions in the box below)

Hope: How does Step Seven relate to me and my creative expression?

- Imagine some time has passed since i began to humbly ask

God. What changes have taken place in my art?

- How does moving out of areas where I fall short bring me closer to my creative potential?
- What might be the thoughts and feelings I am now experiencing as I engage in my creative expression?

Leader/Facilitator: We now have ten more minutes to write.

(Allow ten minutes to write. Tech times)

Open Sharing and Wrap Up

Leader/Facilitator: In the time we have left, we will take a show of hands to hear from those who wish to share something they wrote, or any breakthroughs or "aha" moments they experienced today.

(Allow about 20 minutes depending on time. Tech times)

Closing

Leader/Facilitator: Are there any announcements related to A.R.T.S. or to this series of workshops?

(Tech person screen-shares the Closing Prayer)

Leader/Facilitator: We will end with the Serenity Prayer, but first, may I ask someone to read the Closing Prayer of A.R.T.S. Anonymous?

In closing, I would like to say that no matter how distanced we may feel from our creative sources, no matter how long it has been since we were in touch with our creative spirit, or how feeble may seem our creative impulses,

they are reawakening in our Higher Power's time, through this program and through our actions, no matter how small or how simple, a day at a time. I may not be able to see my own growth, or even to see my creations as beautiful, but I am able to see yours as inspiring and enriching my emotional, spiritual and physical world. We are not recovering merely to hide our light under a bushel; our creative gifts are a gift. To celebrate them, we humbly apply ourselves, sometimes to the work of art, and sometimes to play. May A.R.T.S. Anonymous teach us that our art, celebrated, will benefit and feed our own souls first, and the world's second, for the world hungers as much for this beauty as for food. We meet here together to feed this deeper hunger.

Leader/Facilitator: Please join me in the Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.