STEP ONE UNMANAGEABILITY EXERCISE

We can use the spiritual malady references mentioned in the book “Alcoholics Anonymous” (page numbers provided) to review honestly the ego manifestations in our CURRENT lives. The following are statements that best capture the inner and outer experience when we are spiritually blocked from our True Nature. They are basically caused by self-centered fear. If you CURRENTLY have unmanageability in the following areas of your life, please consider the fact that you may be moving away from REAL happiness and contentment. – Barefoot Bill

1) Am I generally restless (that sense of “something’s missing”), irritable (which means “easily annoyed”) and discontented (which means “never satisfied”)? (Page xxviii) YES____NO____. Do you experience these feelings often? YES____NO____. Do you feel like you never belong or that you are not a part of, even in your own family? YES____NO____. Are you usually uncomfortable in your own skin? YES____NO____. Do you experience an ongoing sense of sadness? YES____NO____. Do you often feel like “something is missing” in your life? YES____NO____.

2) Am I having trouble with personal relationships? (Page 52) Do you take care of others too much, to the point where you neglect to do the things you need to do to take care of yourself? YES____NO____. List names of those close to you (family, friends, co-workers) and evaluate how you are getting along with these people. Also include your relationship with yourself and your Higher Power. Include a few examples of how you treat perfect strangers or those who can’t do anything for you. What seems to be the problems that you are having with those around you?

3) Am I having trouble controlling my emotional nature? (Page 52) Are most of your days best described as emotionally up and down? YES____NO____. Consider how you manage your emotions. Are you in control of your negative emotions or are they in control of you? IN CONTROL____NOT IN CONTROL____. When you lash out in anger, do you feel like you have no other choice or that it’s “their fault”? YES____NO____. Look at some of your more frequent negative emotions (like jealousy, impatience, lust, fear, guilt, frustration, greed, anger, shame, etc.) and analyze them individually in the following way: When you feel this way, what do you say and do? Are you able to find ways to quickly work through them without harming yourself or others, or do you become inapproachable for hours or days at a time? Are you quick to criticize with a biting or sarcastic tongue? Do you beat yourself up for saying or doing? Are you able to find ways to quickly work through them without harming yourself or others, or do you become inapproachable for hours or days at a time? Are you quick to criticize with a biting or sarcastic tongue? Do you beat yourself up for saying or doing?

4) Am I prey to misery and depression? (Page 52) How often in the average month are you miserable or depressed? _______. How long does it last and what do you do to get rid of it? _______. How does life and other people’s behavior cause you misery and depression? What was going on the last few times you were miserable or depressed? _______. Are any of these recurring? _______. When you are miserable or depressed, do you avoid people, sleep all day, think about hurting yourself or others, or seek escape through alcohol/drugs/food/etc. or extended periods in front of the TV or computer? YES____NO____.

5) Am I having trouble making a living? (Page 52) What areas of your life are not in balance? Included here are: finances/savings/spending/credit cards/loans, your marriage/parenting/friendship/work life, education, physical/emotional/mental/spiritual health, do you set aside time for fun/for being alone, are you overweight, do you drink too much coffee or smoke too much, are you saving problems getting or keeping a job, have you had a routine medical check-up recently, etc.

6) Do I feel useless? (Page 52) Do you often wonder why you are even alive?” YES____NO____. Do you often feel inconvenienced or taken advantage of by others? YES____NO____. Do you have difficulty finding interests or “fitting in”? YES____NO____. Do you feel like there is no meaning to your life or that you have nothing to contribute to life? YES____NO____. Explain any “YES” here:

7) Is fear a big part of my life? (Page 52) How much of the average week are you experiencing fear? ________%. What do you say or do when you are fearful? ______________________________. What does fear prevent you from doing? ______________________________. How do you get rid of fear? ______________________________. List some of your more common fears. Ask yourself why you have them and if they are real or imagined?
1) Am I often unhappy? (Page 52) How much of the average week are you unhappy? ____ %. What do you say or do when you are unhappy? _____________________________________________________________. How do you get rid of unhappiness? _____________________________________________________________. Can you usually be described as positive and upbeat? YES NO. When asked about how you are doing, you say that you are doing well. Even though you say that, do you often know deep within that this is not the truth? YES NO. What areas or past events in your life bring about recurring unhappiness? _____________________________________________________________.

2) Am I an extreme example of self-will run riot, though I usually don't think so? (Page 62) Do friends and relatives sometimes say that you are selfish even though you don't agree? YES NO. Do you end relationships only because the other person doesn't act the way you think they should? YES NO. Are you a ‘team player’? YES NO. Do you spend most of the time thinking of yourself instead of thinking of what you can do for others? YES NO. Is your motto ‘what’s in it for me’? YES NO. Do you think that some rules/laws don’t apply to you? YES NO. Do you exhibit signs of or participate in road rage? YES NO. Do other drivers describe you as considerate? YES NO.

3) Am I leading a double life? Are you very much the actor, presenting to the outer world your stage character, which is the one you like your fellows to see? Do you want to enjoy a certain reputation, but know in your heart that you don't deserve it? YES NO. Are you under constant fear and tension because of this, worrying that you may be “found out”? (Page 73) YES NO. Are you lying to or keeping something from your sponsor/spiritual advisor/recovery network? YES NO. Do you usually do what you say and say what you do? YES NO. Are you involved in relationships (romantic or illegal) that you shouldn't be? YES NO. What are your hidden secrets: _____________________________________________________________.

4) Am I like a tornado roaring through the lives of others? Do you have a habit of breaking hearts, sabotaging sweet relationships, and uprooting affections? (Page 82) YES NO. Have you avoided making amends to your family and those closest to you? YES NO. Do you have difficulty keeping friendships for more than a few months? YES NO. Do you have a habit of pushing people away? YES NO. Are you pursuing newcomers for something selfish instead of only helping them in their recovery and spiritual growth? YES NO. Do co-workers, family, and friends sometimes find you inapproachable? YES NO.

5) Are my selfish and inconsiderate habits keeping my home in turmoil? (Page 82) Are you more interested in your own needs and wants than you are with the needs and wants of your family? YES NO. Have you made amends to your family but continue the behavior you originally made amends for? YES NO. Do you sometimes hide away at meetings to avoid responsibilities at home? YES NO. Do you spend “quality time” with your spouse/family on a regular basis? YES NO. Would your spouse/family agree with your previous answer? YES NO. Has anyone in your household recently said something like this to you, ‘The only person you ever think of is yourself’? YES NO.

After evaluating these areas, can you now admit that there are many areas of your life (especially your inner life: thinking/emotions) are unmanageable? YES NO.