

# How to Listen to God: Overcoming Addiction Through Practice of Two-Way Prayer

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In this book, the author describes his six years with James Houck a 96 year old member of the Oxford Group. James was the last living link to the spiritual roots of the Twelve Step Movement. Since 1996, James Houch and Wally paton have taken thousands of people through the Four Steps of Surrender, Sharing, Restitution and Guidance to free them from the bondage of obsession and self-destructive behavior by establishing and maintaining a two way communication with the "God who speaks." In addition, they have shown over one hundred thousand people how to practice two-way prayer as described in the simple, four-page pamphlet titled "How To Listen To God".

Wally Paton is the author of Back to Basics--The Alcoholics Anon-ymous Beginners' Meetings and How to Listen to God-Overcoming Addiction Through Practice of Two-way Prayer. He is the originator of the Back to Basics Beginners' Meetings, which have grown to more than 5,000 groups, and produced more than 500,000 recoveries since its reintroduction into the Twelve-Step community in 1997. This original 12-Step meeting format was a phenomenal success during the 1940's and 1950's, but had become an all but lost piece of history until Wally rediscovered it.

Wally started his 12-Step spiritual journey on October 30,1988. The following year, his sponsor told him, "If you don't know where we came from, you'll never know what a miracle this program truly is." Wally took this challenge to heart and set out to learn all he could about the early days of the Twelve Step Movement.

In the spring of 1993, Wally was in Washington, DC conducting research for his first book, But, for the Grace of God, which dealt with the explosive growth of the Twelve-Step movement in the 1940's. While sorting through some archival materials, he came across a 20-page pamphlet, published in 1944, which described in detail how one of the local groups was taking newcomers through the Twelve Steps in four one-hour sessions. In his subsequent travels throughout the United States, Wally found many reprints of this pamphlet along with various formats for conducting Beginners' Meetings. In addition, he interviewed more than one hundred "old-timers" who had recovered in the 1940's. Many told him the Beginners' Meetings had saved their lives, and they were disappointed when the meetings were replaced with other formats in the 1960's and 1970's.

Wally researched the Beginners' Meetings for two more years. Then in the fall of 1995, Wally's spiritual advisor challenged him to stop talking about the four one-hour sessions and start doing something about them.

He said, "Wally, if you're ever going to learn how to fly, you have to get out of flight school and climb into the plane." This was a scary proposition for someone who had a phobia about speaking in public. But Wally walked through the fear and started conducting the Beginners' Meetings.

But, for the first year, Wally "flew the plane" right into the ground. Even though he thought he was being true to the original program, he had inadvertently incorporated some material from the 1970's into the Beginners' Meetings, and as a result, he wasn't seeing the recovery rates that had been achieved by the Twelve Step pioneers.

Then in March of 1996, Wally met James Houck. At the time, James was 90 years old and

had been a sober member of the Oxford Group for sixty-one years. Bill W. and Dr. Bob S. also were members of the Oxford Group before they founded Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939. James was the last person alive who had attended Oxford Group meetings with Bill W. and knew, from first hand experience, the spiritual roots and the fundamental principles of the "Big Book" and the original Twelve Step program.

James provided Wally with three missing concepts from the original program that allowed him to successfully "fly the plane." They were: (1) the verbal Fourth Step (moral inventory), (2) the expanded Ninth Step that included forgiveness as well as restitution, and (3) the written Eleventh Step (prayer and meditation). He supplied Wally with a four-page pamphlet, written in 1938 by a person who had attended Oxford Group meetings with Dr. Bob. This pamphlet, titled "How to Listen to God," provided clear, concise directions on how to conduct two-way prayer.

Since that eventful meeting in 1996, Wally and James have been traveling across the United States carrying the message of the Twelve Step pioneers at B2B and HTLTG workshops.

I am enthralled by this book, the message contained therein. Now realizing God has been trying to share with me. -- Jeri D email Feb 21, 2002

I read a copy I found on a table at Barnes and Noble. I think everyone should read it. -- Jami email August 30, 2003

This book has been a life changing experience. I believe that the message in this book is SO important. --Deanna Kohlhoff email July 01, 2003

#### Other Books

Healing Through Broken Relationships. This chapter is about reconciling the difficulties of being in your body and learning to look past negative feelings toward your bodies to find gratitude in this life experience. Throughout our lives, we will have many ups and downs, and for some of us, dark thoughts will tell us we aren't enough. This chapter talks about how we can heal through the brokenness of living and find contentment and joy again.

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