

# THE NATIONAL ONLINE RECOVERY COURSE

## SESSION FOUR

■ THE  
■ RECOVERY  
■ COURSE

FREEDOM FROM ADDICTION

### **Welcome**

We would like to welcome you to the Recovery Course and we are glad that you have chosen to take a step forward on your journey in Recovery by joining this course with us.

We have created this workbook so that it will make the coursework easier to follow.

### **What is The Recovery Course?**

The Recovery Course is a Twelve Step programme albeit one that focuses on all kinds of addiction from alcohol and drug dependency through to gambling, sex addiction, pornography, self - harming and eating disorders. It is designed to bring freedom to people who struggle with addiction or any compulsive behaviour.

The Recovery Course also differs from a typical Anonymous Fellowship is that it is designed to enhance our recovery work by integrating texts from the Bible with the Twelve Steps.

The course works alongside conventional AA and NA programmes and guests are positively encouraged to join these other Anonymous Fellowships in conjunction with The Recovery Course should they so wish.

### **Who is it for?**

The Recovery Course is open to anyone struggling with any sort of addiction or any compulsive behaviour that is spoiling one's life, such as using drugs, alcohol, pornography, sex, gambling and self-harming to name just a few. The course is a good starter for those completely new to recovery as well as those whom have been in recovery for years, but would like to take a fresh look at the steps from a Christian perspective

### **Format of the course**

The virtual course runs once a week for 12 weeks, typically starting at 7pm for a 7:15pm start with a 15-20-minute talk and testimony and then discussion in single-sex small groups for around 45 mins. The evening ends around 9pm. Each week there is some simple 'Coursework' that helps each participant to explore each of the 12 steps in a deeper way. Nobody has to do the 'Coursework', but it's fair to say that the guests who throw themselves into this are the ones who profit the most. The Coursework is entirely for the guest's benefit and no one else gets to see it; it is completely private.

*We look forward to welcoming you and walking with you on this journey  
to freedom from addiction.*

## Session 4 - Opening Pandora's Box to Dig For Victory

There are no right or wrong answers to the following questions, just honest answers.

Honesty is the key because as Jesus says in John 8:32:

*"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

Step 4: We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

***"And so I'm not keeping one bit of this quiet, I'm laying it all out on the table; my complaining to high heaven is bitter, but honest"*** Job 7:11 (The Message)

***"Love God, all you saints; God takes care of all who stay close to him...be brave. Be strong. Don't give up"*** Psalm 31:23-24 (The Message)

### Topic for thought

The subject of this week's session is all about looking at ourselves and recognising some of the entrenched, long-standing resentments and grudges we are holding. Over the last month we have come to see that we have been powerless to successfully change our addictive behaviour no matter how hard we have tried. As a result our lives have become increasingly unmanageable and some of the things we have been doing could be considered to be 'insane'. We have come to realise that we need a power greater than ourselves who will begin to change us and restore us to sanity, and this power is found in Jesus. While looking at Step 3 some of us made a decision to turn our wills and our lives over to the care of God and as a result we have begun a new life.

### The Issue

The purpose of Step 4 is to bring into the light all our entrenched, longstanding resentments and grudges, recognising how much they damage us and how we need to be rid of them if we are to be free and get well. Harboursing resentments is like storing toxic waste within ourselves and if we do not get rid of this poison these destructive feelings are very likely to lead us into relapse and we'll be back to where we started

### The Goals

On completion of Step 4 we should be able to...

- Realise who and what I am holding resentments and grudges against
- Realise how these grudges and resentments are badly affecting me
- Realise how often the grudges and resentments are trivial and absurd
- Realise, especially when I have been abused, how some of the resentments are justified and I am not at fault
- Acknowledge my priorities in life – me first or God first?
- Acknowledge my integrity – can I be trusted?
- Acknowledge my attitude of mind – is it open or closed?
- Acknowledge my body – do I respect or abuse it?

### The Lies

The fourth step in the recovery journey is to bring into the light all our entrenched, long-standing resentments and grudges, recognising how much they damage us and how we need to be rid of them. Once again there will probably be a quiet persuasive voice in our heads that is lying to us, and trying to persuade us this is a bad idea:

- "The past doesn't matter any more; let bygones be bygones"
- "You're only going to get hurt again by digging up the past"
- "You've learned to live with your hurts, why mess everything up now?"
- "Others are much more to blame than you"

- “I can’t do this. It’s going to be too upsetting”
- “I don’t have the courage to do this; it’s too difficult”

These questions are designed to help us see what is involved and the benefits we will reap in making a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. For some of the things you record here you will need to try and make amends to the person affected and that will be looked at in Step 8. They will also help us find the right Sponsor. Make sure you have a Sponsor available who you can talk things over with. The road to recovery is not a journey you can make alone.

You can say whatever you want in whatever way you want; be honest and say what’s in your heart. And answer the questions one day at a time; don’t be tempted to do them all in one go !

**If you haven’t completed Steps 1, 2 and 3 yet then please don’t start Step 4 as it will be very difficult to successfully complete.** Spend the next few weeks reviewing the Pause For Thought of the earlier sessions and especially Step 3 which says, “We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God”. Once you have completed these three steps to the best of your ability you will be ready to move on.

Finally, whatever you write down keep in a safe place as you may be revealing some deeply painful experiences that you wouldn’t want anyone else reading. Consider doing this exercise on a password protected computer so that you can then safely delete what you have written at an appropriate time.

## **Day 1**

1. A Sponsor is someone who will support and encourage you in the progress you are making. They should be someone of the same sex as you and with whom you have empathy as they have shared their own experiences. It is important they have completed their own Step 4 and Step 5 work in the past. Refer to the document ‘What Is A Sponsor?’ that you were given this week. List the names and phone numbers/e-mail addresses of possible Sponsors.

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2. Many of us have reservations about starting our Moral Inventory. What are your fears?

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3. Our inventory will solely concentrate on negative things from our past. We will only be looking at the bad side and ignoring the good things we have done and the risk is this negative view of our past will batter our already distorted and probably pretty low self-esteem. So for the sake of balance, what are some of the good things you have done in your life? What five immediately spring to mind? If lots bubble to the surface then write down as many as you would like. Once you start your Moral Inventory it might be good to take the occasional look at this list to remind you that things aren’t all bad!

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## **Day 2**

Below are some questions that will get you thinking about some of the things you need to put down on your Moral Inventory. On a separate sheet of paper or on a computer answer to the best of your ability the questions that appear most relevant to your recovery:

4. Have you had any broken relationships? If so, describe them and how they hurt others or yourself. Describe any anger or resentment that you have over these relationships.

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5. Have you ever held a grudge? Did you try to get revenge? If so, explain the situation, what happened, including whether or not someone else was hurt.

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6. Describe times that you have been oversensitive. Did this ever damage your relationship with others?

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7. Describe your relationship with your friends, work colleagues or neighbours. Is there something that you wish hadn't happened and that you could do over again? If so, explain in detail.

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8. Describe your relationships with your birth family as well as any adopted family. Do you have conflicts with any siblings or with your parents? Are you avoiding these matters in your family?

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9. Describe your relationships with your own nuclear family (spouse and children). Is there anything that you wish that you could erase from this part of your life?

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10. Do you ever use people to get what you want? If yes, write down what you did and how you felt afterwards.

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11. Do you ever gossip or perform character assassination on another person in order to get on in your business or social world? Or do you do this in order to feel superior to the one gossiped about? !

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12. Are laws made for other people whereas you feel you have the right to make up your own laws as you go along?

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13. If revenge were possible now, who would be at the top of your list? Why? !!! 14. Appraising each situation you have written about here as objectively as you are able, can you see where you have been at fault?

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### **Day 3**

Now's the time to start our Moral Inventory, but we don't need to worry ourselves about when, how or to whom we are going to confess these things. For the time being we are only revealing them to ourselves and in doing so examine what the consequences have been for us.

We are aiming to be honest and thorough in this inventory and we are looking for progress in our journey. We are not aiming for perfection. As someone once wisely counselled, “If you want perfection or nothing, you’ll always get nothing.”

How to fill in the Moral Inventory form (Resentments)

### **Column 1: Who?**

Filling in your form is simple. Using the answers to the questions on the previous pages list all the people and organisations against whom you are still bearing grudges or resentments. Chronological order is unimportant and the intensity of our resentment may bear little relation to the scale of the original cause. For instance, I was at The Independent Newspaper in the mid-eighties where I been headhunted to help launch the photographic side of their new magazine. Frustrated by how poorly the new product was being run I vented my frustration on the telephone to a third party. Someone overheard my comments and promptly reported me to the Editor-in-Chief. I was sacked on the spot. Interestingly, my resentment is against the Editor rather than against the ‘informer’ whose actions instigated my downfall. All the Editor did was activate the Company code so why do I feel so resentful about him laying down the letter of the law in my case?

Resentment is primarily pent-up anger that arises out of fear. Go as far back as you can and list everyone and everything that you resent. Once you get going you’ll be amazed what comes up!

### **Column 2: Why?**

Next to the person or institution you are holding the grudge against, list the cause, either real or imaginary, of your resentment. In this column you are recording the specific deeds you perceive that someone did and that damaged you in some way. An example would be a parent who said you were useless when you were trying to help them with something, or it may be a friend who humiliated you in front of your peers.

### **Column 3: How?**

In this column put down how the specifically painful deed that was inflicted upon you has affected your life both now and in the past. Have you suffered from a broken relationship or been the subject of slanderous gossip? Have you been the victim of an abusive relationship in which sexual intimacy or trust has been broken? Have you been physically or mentally damaged? Have you suffered financially?

This is also the time to consider why you have such passionate feelings of resentment within you. You’ll probably discover it is because it hits you in a very vulnerable spot linked to your self-esteem.

We should pay special attention to Column 3. There may be occasions when we genuinely were not at fault, but most likely there is a selfish aspect to our resentments. Someone or some organisation did something that affected my own personal interests, cost me money, stopped me getting my own way, and this gave rise to feelings of anger born out of deep-rooted fear and insecurity.

There is nothing abnormal about this. Everyone tends to react this way whether they wrestle with addictive behaviour or not. But as addicts we need to get these feelings sorted if we are to get a life that is bigger and better than the one we currently have, because resentment is one of the food supplies that helps keep our addiction alive.

Storing unresolved grudges and resentments only harms us, while our enemies, blissfully unaware of our anger, rest in their beds easy. It is us who suffer and when we are suffering we are much more likely to use our addiction of choice to make ourselves feel better. That’s the irrevocable truth of the matter. ! When we also see that our grudges and resentments are, by and large, unjustified, we will be much nearer to the new life of freedom we are longing for.

Don’t wait to start. You might be thinking, “This is getting too tough, I didn’t realise the climb was going to be this hard”. We want to assure and encourage you; the final destination is you becoming the person that deep down you have always wanted to be. You can do it!

***“But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.”***

Philippians 3: 13-14 (NIV)

**Example copy:**

<b>Who?</b> Against whom or what am I holding a grudge?	<b>Why?</b> What happened?	<b>How?</b> How did this affect me personally and, in reality, who is at fault?
Editor, The Independent newspaper	Sacked me without notice for speaking my mind. He promised me one month's money and then refused to pay it as I got a job straight away with another newspaper. Money was later paid after protest	I felt humiliated, stupid and anxious about no job and no money. It was a wake-up call though as I couldn't continue to work in such an arrogant way. I was without a job for two hours but with many years hindsight the overall effect was beneficial. I was offered job at The Sunday Telegraph where I remained for 18 years. I was able to semi-retire at 53. As to who was at fault I am totally responsible for being sacked. My behaviour was unreasonable and I should have discussed my frustrations with The Editor in an adult fashion
JS, bully at school	All through school I was ridiculed about my ears which stuck out. I was embarrassed, humiliated, felt worthless, second-rate. I grew my hair long to cover my ears. Even now I am awkward about how I look even though my ears no longer protrude. Friend of mine also bullied with same problem and he decided to have operation and died under anaesthetic	I felt unwanted and this sense of low self-esteem remains to this day. I hate bullying now and get angry at any sense of injustice to the point where I will get physically involved in violence if necessary. Whilst I now acknowledge this way of violently responding is wrong my friend and I were abused and it is appropriate to be angry
Policeman	Booked me for stopping on a red route for 15 seconds when I was handing over a package to someone. He enjoyed doing it. I got a £100 fine which I couldn't afford as I was unemployed at the time	I felt powerless, stupid about getting caught and anxious about the money. Apart from the money no damage was done to me. I was angry and wanted to retaliate but I couldn't. I am totally responsible. I broke the law and the policeman was doing his job. I was the one at fault.

On the next page is a template that you can copy and you can then use to write your own examples:

**Moral Inventory Form :**

<b>Who?</b> Against whom or what am I holding a grudge?	<b>Why?</b> What happened?	<b>How?</b> How did this affect me personally and, in reality, who is at fault?


### **Day 4-7**

These questions are designed to help us in making a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves and this week we are especially reviewing Fear, Shame and Sexual Conduct.

The answers you put down here will form the basis of a confession you will disclose to God and another person you trust. For some of the things you record here you will also be trying to make amends to the person affected and this will be looked at in Step 8. Make sure you have a Sponsor available who you can talk things over with. The road to recovery is not a journey you can make alone and many of the following questions can be unsettling.

Before you begin each day's questions pray the Prayer for Serenity. Also pray that God Himself will bring into your mind the things He wants you to bring into the light. Be courageous and honest as you face your past. God is with you and He will see you safely through.

**If you haven't completed Steps 1, 2 and 3 yet then please don't start Step 4 as it will be very difficult to successfully complete.** Spend the next few weeks reviewing the Pause For Thought of the earlier sessions and especially Step 3 which says, "We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God". Once you have completed these three steps to the best of your ability you will be ready to move on.

Finally, whatever you write down keep in a safe place as you may be revealing some deeply painful experiences you don't want anyone else reading. Consider doing this exercise on a password protected computer so that you can then safely delete what you have written at an appropriate point in the future. #

Remember, Romans 8:1, "...***there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus***".

Over the next couple of days you are going to start considering questions that relate to your **childhood**. Quickly circle with a pen the questions that are relevant to you and then, to the best of your ability, write down your answers below each question or on another sheet of paper or on a computer.

### **Step 4 Questions**

1. Were you wanted at birth?

2. What were your family circumstances at the time of your birth, such as family size, age differences, financial status and atmosphere? Would you describe your family as generally happy or unhappy? Was there laughter, affection, arguing, depression, crying?

3. In general, what did your family think of you?
4. If you have brothers or sisters who are younger than you, how did you feel about their arrival?
5. Were you an only child? If so, did you resent or enjoy that?
6. Did your parents want a child of the opposite sex when they had you? If so, did they name you or dress you to match their preferred gender?
7. When you were a child were you separated from one of your parents? If so, what actually happened and did you experience fear or guilt about this separation; did you feel in any way responsible?
8. Did you have any kind of sexual curiosity as a child? If so, did anyone know about this and how did they respond?
9. As a child did you ever see anyone naked or mostly unclothed? If so, how did you feel about this?
10. If you are feeling uneasy thinking about your sexuality when you were young, why exactly are you anxious?
11. Were you afraid of the dark? Why?
12. Did you use to wet the bed? If so up to what age and how did you feel? Did your parents punish you or were they supportive and understanding?
13. Did your family pressurize you to resolve arguments with others by fighting? Were you afraid of this pressure?
14. How did your parents punish you? Did they try to reason with you or was it in general physical without any explanation? Or did it tend to be a mental punishment involving long silences and rejection?
15. When you were punished how often did you feel it was unfair and unjust?
16. How did you react to punishment?
17. What kind of marriage do you think your parents had? If they fought did it scare you? Did you have to take sides?

18. What were your parent's attitudes about religion?

19. Did you ever feel confused, angry or put off by religion? If 'yes' explain why.

20. If you were named after someone, what was that person like?

21. If you ever stole anything when you were young when was the first time, what did you steal and why did you steal it? If stealing things was a relatively common occurrence list some of the things you can remember.

22. Did your family move house often? If so, did you make friends and then have to break off the relationship so often that you became afraid to get too close to other people?

23. Do you remember starting school? What were your feelings?

24. While at school can you recall any resentment that you felt towards teachers, pupils or anyone else. Write down the details of any fights, rejection, hurts, injustices or embarrassments – absolutely anything that makes you feel uneasy.

25. Were you sent away to boarding school and if so were you happy about that? How did you feel about your time there? Did anything happen there that upset or frightened you? If so, did you tell your parents? How did they react and how did you feel about their reaction?

26. When you were upset and frightened how did your parents usually respond? Did they put an arm around you to comfort you or did they just tell you to pull yourself together? Or did they just ignore you?

27. Were you ashamed of or embarrassed by your parents because of something they said or did? If so, write down some specific events.

28. Did you ever see your parents in the nude? What were your feelings?

29. Did you ever see or hear your parents having sex? What were your feelings?

30. Did your parents ever give you chores to do? If so, what were they? Were they fair? Were your parents easy or difficult to please?

31. What question about your childhood experiences is the toughest for you to answer?



**Over the next couple of days you are going to consider questions that relate to your adolescence. Quickly circle with a pen the questions that are relevant to you and then, to the best of your ability, write down your answers below or on a separate sheet of paper or on a computer.**

32. Did you have any homosexual desires in your adolescence? If so, how did you feel about them?

33. Did you have any homosexual experiences in your adolescence? If so, how did you feel about them?

34. What were you taught about sex by your parents or other authority figures?

35. How much of your sexual knowledge comes from Pornography?

36. If you are female, were you ever taught that men are only interested in sex? If so, how has that affected you and your relationships?

37. If you are male, were you ever taught that your sexual performance and 'conquests' define your masculinity? If so, how has this affected you and your relationships?

38. In your teenage years did you have friends? If so, what kind of a friend were you? Did they include you in everything or were you occasionally excluded? If you were excluded, how did you feel?

39. At school did you participate in sports? What were the reasons why you chose to participate or not? What did you feel about sport?

40. Did your parents encourage you to play sport? If so, were they supportive or did they ever express disappointment in any lack of ability or achievement on your part?

41. Were you a trouble-maker? If so, in what way? Did you ever vandalise property or set fire to things?

42. Did you feel that you were a coward because you did not want to fight?

43. Did you like to pick fights? Were you a bully?

44. Did your parents ever seem to like your friends more than they did you?

45. Growing up did you have the kinds of clothes that other teenagers wore?

46. Did your appearance (hair, looks, dress, etc) embarrass your parents?
47. Did other people ever make fun of you, or look down on you and avoid you because of your appearance?
48. Did you resent not being a part of the 'in' crowd or not being a leader?
49. Did you ever feel inadequate or inferior because you developed physically later than others? If so, write about your feelings.
50. Were you shy or outgoing?
51. If you were shy did you ever use humour or bad behaviour to make yourself more popular and gain the respect of others?
52. If you dropped out of school, explain your feelings and reasons.
53. Did anything happen to you in high school that was a continuing source of shame?
54. Did your parents compare you to other family members or friends? How did them wanting you to be like someone else make you feel?
55. If you wanted to get the attention of your family did you tell them what you wanted or did you use manipulative means such as sulking, temper tantrums, running away from home, refusing to eat, striving to be a good child, acting like a clown, pretending to be useless and in need of help, crying?
56. Did you play off one family member against another?
57. Did you lie? If so, do you recall what kind of lies that you told? How did you feel when you got caught lying?
58. Were you jealous or envious of others? If so write down the details.
59. What was the attitude towards sex in your family? How did you respond to these attitudes?
60. Do you see any of your family's attitudes towards sex influencing your life now? If so, in what way?

61. Was there enough money available in the family for the things that you needed? If not, did you feel resentful of that?

62. Did it seem like other brothers or sisters got more than you did?

63. Write out your feelings about money as an adolescent.

64. Were you the kind of child that you would like to have?

65. Academically were you considered one of the brightest pupils in your early years at school and then everyone else seemed to catch up and you were no longer achieving the results that you or others were expecting? Did anyone express disappointment that you were no longer a high achiever?

66. Did anyone consider you stupid at school?

67. Did you feel superior or inferior to other students?

68. Were you dependable as a friend or did you break off friendships if something or someone more desirable came along?

69. What was the most embarrassing moment of your adolescence?

70. What was the best experience that you had in adolescence and why?

71. What was the worst experience that you had in adolescence and why?

**Over the next couple of days you are going to consider questions that relate to your adulthood since you left school and went to University or out to work. Quickly circle with a pen the questions that are relevant to you and then, to the best of your ability, write down your answers below or on a separate sheet of paper or on a computer.**

72. If you have ever had sexual intercourse when was your first experience? What were your feelings at the time? Be as explicit about them as possible.

73. If you have never had sexual intercourse how do you feel about that and why?

74. Did you or a partner ever get pregnant from early sexual intercourse? If so, what feelings did you have and what actions did you take?

75. If you decided to have the pregnancy terminated or the baby adopted how did that make you feel at the time and how do you feel now?

76. When, how and in what instances has your selfish pursuit of sexual pleasures damaged yourself and/or other people? Who was hurt and how badly?

77. Did you spoil your partnership or marriage through selfish pursuit of sexual relationships with another person or through pornography?

78. Has your standing in the community been damaged in any way through the selfish pursuit of sexual relations with another person or through pornography?

79. Have you ever been caught in a compromising situation with another person or with pornography? If so, did you feel guilty or try to absolve your guilt by blaming it on others?

80. How have you reacted to frustration in sexual matters? When denied, have you become abusive or manipulative?

81. If there was rejection or coldness at home did you use this as a reason for infidelity with another person or using pornography?

82. Did you ever feel lonely and try to get sexually involved with another person, or use pornography in order to overcome that sense of loneliness? How did you feel after the experience? Did you feel even more lonely?

83. Do you ever use sex as a punishment or reward?

84. Do you care about your partner's feelings or are they primarily someone to have sex with?

85. Write down any inappropriate sexual experiences you have had including incest, animals, children.

86. Do you engage in sex in order to build your own ego or to get a feeling of power and conquest?

87. Are you afraid of being sexually rejected?

88. Looking at both past and present, what sexual situations have caused you anxiety, bitterness, frustration or depression?

89. Are you ashamed of your body or the way that you look? If so, why?
90. Write down what is most displeasing to you about your physical appearance.
91. Write down what you are most pleased with about your physical appearance.
92. If you are married why did you get married?
93. If you are or have been married, or are in a committed relationship, what kind of person are they? Do they remind you of your mother or father and if so how?
94. If you are not married but living with someone, why have you not made a marriage commitment?
95. If you are married, do you resent the responsibilities of marriage and family? If so, why?
96. If you are married or in a committed relationship, do you ever allow your mother or father to come between you and your spouse/partner?
97. What are your present feelings about sex?
98. What are your present feelings about your parents?
99. What are your present feelings about your brothers and sisters?
100. What are your present feelings about your grandparents?
101. What are your present feelings about your friends?
102. What are your present feelings about your children?
103. What are your present feelings about your spouse/partner?
104. What are your present feelings about your job or lack of job?

105. What are your present feelings about your addictive behaviours?

106. What are your present feelings about your finances?

107. What are your present feelings about your marriage (or divorce)?

108. What are your hopes and goals?

109. Have you intentionally destroyed good feelings that others have had towards you, because people thinking well of you makes you uneasy? Write down any examples that come to mind.

110. Do you ever use illness as an excuse to avoid responsibilities, get attention, sympathy or get out of a jam?

111. Do you work compulsively? If so, whose approval are you trying to get? That of your boss, your parents, or your own?

112. If you are divorced or are getting one, write out any negative feelings about the situation and the people involved. Include resentments, fears and guilt concerning your relationship with your spouse and your children.

113. If you are married, write out truthfully how you feel about your spouse and children. Are they living up to your expectations? Are your expectations reasonable or unreasonable?

114. How do you think your life would be different if your wife and/or children were not in your life?

115. Do you feel that no one really understands you? That if people only knew what you had been through then they would not expect so much from you?

116. Do you feel different from others in recovery? Do you feel inferior or superior to them?

117. Do you avoid being honest about yourself by looking at others and saying things like, "At least I am not that screwed up"?

118. Do you judge or make fun of others who appear to be less fortunate, either mentally, physically, or morally than you think that you are?

119. Are you afraid of getting too close to another person for the fear of being rejected?

120. Do you reject others before they can reject you?

121. Do you tend to judge people on first sight by their appearance?

122. Do you tell others how bad you are or have been as a source of pride or a tool for self-pity?

123. Do you tell people how great you are or have been, or how much money or possessions you have as a way to boost your ego?

124. Do you have a need to play the 'big shot'?

125. What makes you feel guilty?

126. Are you hurt when people turn away from you and won't play your games?

127. Do you find yourself punishing your children the way that your parents punished you?

128. Do you spend so much time doing your job in order to get money or recognition that your family sees little of you?

129. Do you argue with people because it's important for you to be seen to be right?

130. Do you become angry when people don't see things the way that you do?

131. Do you ever feel superior because you perceive you have the advantage of a better education, more money, impressive job or social background? If so, in what way do you feel superior?

132. Do you ever feel inferior because you perceive you have the disadvantage of a worse education, less money, unimpressive job or poor social background? If so, in what way do you feel inferior?

133. Do you recklessly borrow money, caring little whether you repay it or not?

134. Do you keep getting involved in 'quick-money' deals that might rocket you to riches with the minimum of effort?

135. Do you mismanage your household budget?

136. How well do you accept conditions that you cannot change?



137. If you are unable to change difficult financial situations, are you willing to take the measures necessary to shape your life to the conditions as they are?
138. What has been the best experience that you have had in your entire life?
139. What has been the worst experience that you have had in your entire life?
140. What is so shameful in your life that you would not want to tell anyone? Is there anyone who would be hurt if you revealed this?
141. Is there anything else from your life that you have not written about that is on your mind and bothering you? If so, write about it and what you are feeling.
142. What have you felt particularly uncomfortable writing about from your life experiences?
143. Appraising each situation you have written about here as objectively as you are able, can you see where you have been at fault?
144. Finally, list every act or deed that you have sworn you will take to the grave and will disclose to no one. Be open and honest. The Big Book of AA is rightly encouraging when it says "...We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it...no matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others."

**Take your time over Step 4. There is no rush to complete it and many people will spend weeks, months and even years sifting through their lives.**

**The process can be difficult at times, which is why it is advisable to have your Sponsor to talk things through with. Your Sponsor will have walked this road themselves and you will be an encouragement and support for one another during this period of transition.**

**And, most importantly, God is with you too. In Isaiah 41:10 (The Message) God promises, *"Don't panic. I'm with you. There's no need to fear for I'm your God. I'll give you strength. I'll help you. I'll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you."***

**The rewards are enormous. Not only will we begin to experience freedom as we bring our secrets out into the light, but we also receive the 'perfect freedom' only found in Jesus Christ's complete forgiveness of all our sins - past, present and future.**

**Don't give up.**

**Congratulations, you are in the process of completing Step 4**

## The Top 8 Relapse Busters

In recovery there are times when we all get frustrated that we are not making the progress we feel we should be and there may also be times when we seem to grind to a complete halt and maybe even relapse. We all lose our way at times, but hopefully the following eight guidelines will get us back on track.

### ***1. We are still in denial***

We may have been successfully in recovery for decades, but 'denial' is always lurking around the corner seeking to trip us up. As soon as we even start vaguely thinking about the possibility of 'using' again and how we might 'get away with it', alarm bells should be ringing very loudly. Remember, relapse is a process so we need to nip it in the bud straight away before it gets the chance of taking on a life of it's own. Go back to your Session 2 and 3 (Step 1) 'Pause For Thought' and review just how insane your life had become. Do you really want to go back to that? And always remember, giving up the second time is so much harder than giving up the first time although of course, Denial will tell you something different because it only knows how to lie! The antidote to denial is truth, which brings us to relapse buster number 2....

### ***2. We have not fully turned our will and life over to the care of God***

Go back to your Session 4 and 5 (Step 3) Coursework. It's natural for all of us to want to be in control of our own destiny, but the sad truth is, that doesn't work. No matter how much we may long for this programme to work without the involvement of God, the sad truth is it doesn't. We need God in everything. It is not enough to just turn the big things in our life over to Him; He needs all the little things as well. Recovery doesn't work successfully until God gets the lot.

### ***3. We are still hanging on to some of our resentments!***

Go back to your Session 6, 7 and 8 (Steps 4 and 5) Coursework. Forgiveness is essential to our spiritual wellbeing. Don't beat yourself up that you are finding forgiving so difficult; it's enormously difficult, but it also needs to be resolved if we are going to be free of our daily struggles. Resentment is one of the food supplies our addiction feeds off and our addictive impulses will only die once we begin to starve them of food. Forgiveness is not something we can do merely by human effort; it is a spiritual act and therefore we need to ask the Holy Spirit to empower us to let go of the pain and harm of the past. Until we are able to forgive we will continue to be held hostage. We will not fully know what it is to be free.

### ***4. We haven't forgiven ourselves***

We are comfortable with the idea that God forgives others, but we think our faults are just too big. "I know God loves and forgives them, but me? I'm not so sure. He knows what I'm really like". While we are in a place where we can't forgive ourselves we will get stuck. It is a form of spiritual pride and self-pity that says, "God's love and mercy is not big enough to deal with my sin". Review Steps 4 and 5 and, if you haven't begun doing it already, start listening to God (as suggested in Step 11). How do I know what God thinks of me? Pick up a bible and read it. One of the best places to start is the Psalms, which were written by King David, and he really wears his heart on his sleeve. On the one hand he felt just like you and me, condemned and often a worthless failure, but he also began over time to see how much God loved him despite of himself. Don't get side-tracked by self-pity and all those "Woe is me" thoughts and start looking God in the face and accepting the truth – you are loved despite who you are and what you have done.

### ***5. We are trying to be better people by our own efforts and in our own strength***

Review Sessions 9 and 10 (Steps 6 and 7). One of the biggest frustrations on this journey is when we feel we are not really becoming a better person. We try so hard to be 'good', but it just doesn't seem to work. There are fleeting moments when we subconsciously think, "well done" and then we revert to the old ways of doing things and the smell of defeat rises in our nostrils again. Becoming a better person is not primarily our responsibility, but God's and he is remarkably good at it. Give him permission to change you into the person that He, and deep down you,

long to be. Hold nothing back. Identify your specific shortcomings and character faults and give Him permission to start changing you from the inside out.

### ***6. We are too proud to take responsibility for our past actions***

Review Sessions 11 and 12 (Steps 8 and 9). We need to take responsibility for past damaged relationships. We must not rationalise or justify our actions. Yes, there may have been good reasons why you behaved as you did and the other person may have also been at fault, but that does not matter. We need to own and take responsibility for our part. We need to clean our side of the street and not get side-tracked by what they did. Until we make amends we will always feel a little guilty and what feeds off guilt? Yes, you got it in one.

### ***7. We don't go to our Anonymous Fellowship or Church support group as often as we used to***

When someone relapses I always ask them, "Have you been going to your local Anonymous Fellowship? Are you still going to church?" More often than not, the answer is 'No' or 'Sometimes'. Recovery does not work in isolation. We are all tempted to use, but before 'picking up' our addiction of choice again we need to pick up a telephone and call our Sponsor or friends who are also in recovery. Keeping clean and sober also entails keeping busy. When I am working hard with others I don't have time to get tempted. When I'm on my own at home not doing anything in particular then that's a different story. Do you keep in contact with the others in your small group? Do you have their phone numbers or e-mail addresses? Have you volunteered to help out in some way on the next Recovery Course or with your local Anonymous Fellowship group? Are you getting involved with your local Church and serving there? If the answer to any of these questions is 'No', that may be where your problem lies. If you think that's the case then do all you can to rectify the situation as soon as you possibly can. As they sometimes say at an AA meeting, *"The only thing you do on your own in recovery is slip."*

The writer of Proverbs in the Old Testament hits the nail on the head when he says, "Become wise by walking with the wise; hang out with fools and watch your life fall to pieces."

### ***8. We have skipped the previous step***

Do you notice how these eight 'Relapse Busters' look at each Step in turn? The 12-Step programme works by having a gentle accumulative affect on us. We have to start with Step 1 (and when we have a problem that's the first place we return to as the problem usually lies there) and then go on to each Step in turn. We cannot skip one. As addicts we love a quick fix for our problems and deep down we long for a quick fix in our recovery. Unfortunately it doesn't work like that. There is the temptation to move through the Steps too quickly, but God is not in a rush. So maybe slow down and allow Him to work at His speed, because He knows us better than we know ourselves, and He will go at just the right speed for our needs. This programme is a process not a race!

## Verses for Session 4

### Step 4: We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

- *"Let's take a good look at the way we're living and reorder our lives under God"* Lamentations 3:40 – The Message
- *"Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."* Joshua 1:9 - NIV
- *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* Romans 8:1 - NIV
- *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"* 2 Corinthians 5:17 - NIV
- *"Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I'm about; see for yourself whether I've done anything wrong - then guide me on the road to eternal life."* Psalm 139:23-24 - The Message
- *"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."* James 5:16 - NIV
- *"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."* Matthew 6:12-14 – NIV
- *"...jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame."* Song of Songs 8:6 – NIV
- *"If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless."* James 1:26 - NIV
- *"But don't look someone to blame. No finger pointing!"* Hosea 4:4 - The Message !
- *"Let's take a good look at the way we're living and reorder our lives under God"* Lamentations 3:40 – The Message
- *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"* 2 Corinthians 5:17 - NIV
- *"Love God, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that's in you, love him with all you've got!"* Deuteronomy 6:5 – The Message
- *"Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met."* Matthew 6:33 - The Message
- *"You're addicted to thrills? What an empty life! The pursuit of pleasure is never satisfied."* Proverbs 21:17 - The Message
- *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is— his good, pleasing and perfect will."* Romans 12:2 - NIV
- *"An intelligent person is always eager to take in more truth; fools feed on fast-food fads and fancies."* Proverbs 15:14 - The Message
- *"...Didn't you realise that your body is a sacred place, the place of the Holy Spirit? Don't you see that you can't live however you please, squandering what God paid such a high price for? The physical part of you is not some piece of property belonging to the spiritual part of you. God owns the whole works. So let people see God in and through your body."* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - The Message
- *"Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother's womb. I thank you, High God—you're breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made! I worship in adoration—what a creation! You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body; you know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something. Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you, the days of my life all prepared before I'd even lived one day."* Psalm 139:13-16 - The Message

## Verses to beat the devil

### **When the devil makes you feel as though God has abandoned you and you feel lonely**

Say, "God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'" – Hebrews 13:5, clear off!

### **When the devil makes you feel afraid**

Say, Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you...Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." – John 14:27, clear off!

### **When the devil makes you feel anxious**

Say, Jesus says, 'do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes...For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.' – Luke 12:22-34, clear off!

### **When the devil makes you feel that God doesn't know what you are going through**

Say, 'For we do not have a high priest (Jesus) who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are— yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.' – Hebrews 4:15-16, clear off!

### **When the devil makes you feel broken hearted and God doesn't care**

Say, 'The LORD is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.' – Psalm 34:18, clear off!

### **When the devil makes you feel discouraged**

Say, 'God is (You) are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.' – Psalm 119:114, clear off!

### **When the devil makes you feel guilty**

Say, 'Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.' – Romans 8:1-2, clear off!

### **When the devil makes you feel overwhelmed**

Say, 'I lift up my eyes to the hills— where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your (my) foot slip— he who watches over you (me) will not slumber...' – Psalm 121, clear off!

### **When the devil makes you feel judged and condemned by God**

Say, 'If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all— how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?...Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all

creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' – Romans 8:31-39, clear off!

**When the devil makes you feel unfairly judged by others**

Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.' – Matthew 5:10-12, clear off!

**When the devil makes you feel powerless**

Say, 'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.' – Ephesians 3:20-21, clear off!

### **Serenity Prayer**

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

*Living one day at a time, Enjoying one moment at a time;*

*Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;*

*Taking, as Jesus did, This sinful world as it is, Not as I would have it;*

*Trusting that You will make all things right If I surrender to your will;*

*So that I may be reasonably happy in this life*

*And supremely happy with You forever in the next.*

*Amen.*

*Reinhold Niebuhr*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father in heaven,*

*hallowed be your name.*

*Your Kingdom come,*

*your will be done,*

*on earth as in heaven.*

*Give us today our daily bread.*

*Forgive us our sins*

*as we forgive those who sin against us.*

*Lead us not into temptation,*

*but deliver us from evil.*

*For the kingdom,*

*the power and the glory are yours.*

*Now and for ever.*

*Amen.*