

THE NATIONAL ONLINE RECOVERY COURSE

SESSION TWELVE

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 12 - From Liberated to Liberator

**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 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to those still in active addiction, and to practice these principles in all our affairs

"Just make sure you stay alert. Keep close watch over yourselves. Don't forget anything of what you've seen. Don't let your heart wander off. Stay vigilant as long as you live. Teach what you've seen and heard to your children and grandchildren."

Deuteronomy 4:9 (The Message)

"So let's do it—full of belief, confident that we're presentable inside and out. Let's keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps his word. Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshiping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big Day approaching."

Hebrews 10:24 (The Message)

Topic for thought

Well done, we've made it to the end. Although that's not strictly true – we have in fact made it to the beginning, because a new life has started to form in each one of us. This week we complete the final step, which is all about acknowledging we are now spiritually alive, are empowered by God and now want to give to others what God has so generously given to each of us so that they too may find the new life that we have found.

The Issue

Over the last two weeks, in Steps 10 and 11, we thought about how we can remain on the right road and prevent the chances of relapsing. In this final step, Step 12, we answer the question, 'Where to now?'

The Goals

- On completion of Step 12 we should be able to...
- Realise the old life has gone and a new life has begun
- Realise I can no longer live this life in my own power
- Realise I have a God-given power, the Holy Spirit, working within me if I ask Him to
- Realise that, if I am to progress, I now need to give away everything that God has so generously given to me
- Realise that all my past hurt and pain has not gone to waste - it can be used by God to liberate others
- Realise that my new life is a life of humility and service, putting others needs before my own
- Realise that where there was once only problems, I now have solutions
- Realise I am now part of a loving, supporting community – The Church

You could say you've made it to the end, but that would not be strictly true. You have actually made it to the beginning! Life starts afresh from now on with each new day and as long as we hold to what we have learned life will never be the same again.

Below are some things it would be advisable to try and do every day from now on if we really want to stay on course and not slip back into old habits. Sometimes though we may get stuck on our journey, so we have also included eight tips that should help us avoid relapsing.

Day 1-7

1. **Every morning** have a ‘quiet time’. Read a passage from the bible and pray asking God to guide you and equip you to follow His teaching and will in your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to deal with everything the day is going to throw at you. And don’t forget your gratitude list; it will continue to remind you of the enormous progress you are making on this journey and get the day off to a positive start. For more detail on how a good ‘quiet time’ can be structured, look at last week’s Coursework.

2. **Every evening** continue to take an inventory. When you have done things well be encouraged and thank God. When you are wrong, admit it promptly and apologise to the injured person.

3. **Every waking minute** live out what you have begun to learn to the best of your ability. Remember, we are looking for progress not perfection! Constantly keep looking for ways and opportunities where you can help and serve others. Don’t despise small things. A smile can transform another’s day. And try and touch base as often as you can with your Sponsor and fellow group members. You will be an encouragement and support to them and they will encourage and be a support to you.

Congratulations! You have completed Step 12

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 its 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 12

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to those still in active addiction, and to practice these principles in all our affairs

- "Live creatively, friends. If someone falls into sin, forgivingly restore him, saving your critical comments for yourself. You might be needing forgiveness before the day's out. Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law. If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived." Galatians 6:1-3 - The Message
- "Freely you have received, freely give." Matthew 10:8 - NIV
- "With God on our side...how can we lose? If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us?" Romans 8:32 - The Message
- "Therefore, I urge you...in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship." Romans 12:1 - NIV
- "It's better to have a partner than go it alone...And if one falls down, the other helps, but if there's no one to help, tough!...By yourself you're unprotected. With a friend you can face the worst. Can you round up a third? A three-stranded rope isn't easily snapped." Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 - The Message
- "All praise to the God and Father of our Master, Jesus...He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so we can be there for that person just as God was there for us." 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 - The Message
- "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28 - NIV

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.*