

THE NATIONAL ONLINE RECOVERY COURSE

SESSION TWO

■ 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 2 - New Order: When Will The Insanity Go?

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 2: We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity

“My grace is enough; it’s all you need. My strength comes into its own in your weakness”

2 Corinthians 12:9 (The Message)

“We carry this precious Message around in the unadorned clay pots of our ordinary lives. That’s to prevent anyone from confusing God’s incomparable power with us. As it is, there’s not much chance of that. You know for yourselves that we’re not much to look at. We’ve been surrounded and battered by troubles, but we’re not demoralised; we’re not sure what to do, but we know that God knows what to do; we’ve been spiritually terrorised, but God hasn’t left our side; we’ve been thrown down, but we haven’t broken” 2 Corinthians 4:7-8 (The Message)

Topic for thought

The subject of this week’s session is all about finding a new order in our lives. We have come to see that over the years 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 God.

The Issue

The purpose of Step 2 is to help us come to our senses and realise the insanity of some of the stuff we have been doing. We have lived with our compulsive behaviour for so long now, possibly without any major consequences, and we may be tempted to think that it is not such a big problem after all. That is mad thinking. The time has come to do something about it. !

The Goals:

On completion of Step 2 we should be able to...

- Realise just how ‘insane’ I have become, but that I can get through this with God’s help
- Realise what steps I need to take to begin to experience God as a real part of my life
- Realise God will give me the strength to face up to the issues in my past
- Realise that God can give me the new life I am longing for
- Realise that I really do matter to God

The Lies:

The second step in the recovery journey is to come to faith in a God who has the power to transform us into the person we deep down long to be and who will liberate us from our life of insanity. There will probably be a quiet persuasive voice in our head that is lying to us, and trying to persuade us there really is no way out:

- “It’s my life, I’m not hurting anyone”
- “God knows what you’re really like, why would He want anything to do with you?”
- “You’re not good enough for God”
- “Believe in a God! You might as well believe in fairy tales”
- “Why would you think that doing something you enjoy is insane?”
- “You’re not doing yourself any harm”

The following questions are designed to help us see the hope we have in God, the only one who has real power over our addictions and compulsive behaviours. They will also help us see where our past actions may have had a touch of 'insanity' about them, even though we couldn't see it at the time, and to see that it is only through the power of God that we become truly 'normal', the person God always intended us to be.

Answer the questions one day at a time; don't be tempted to do them all in one go!

Day 1

- 1. What do you believe about God? What do you think He's like? It doesn't matter if your view of Him is unflattering or even downright rude! Just be honest and put down what you genuinely 'feel'.

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- 2. In what ways are your feelings about God similar to the feelings you have about your own parents? For instance, "I can't trust God as my Mum consistently let me down", or "My father thought I was no good and God probably thinks the same". If your feelings are different about God to the way you feel about your parents, in what way are they different?

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Day 2

- 3. In what areas of your life might you be prepared at some point to let God help you? Your addiction (alcohol, gambling, drugs, overeating, pornography, etc) is probably a prime choice, so write that down. What about some other 'external' areas, such as job, a relationship, financial problems and so on? Also are there other more subtle 'internal' areas you would like him to help with? Maybe things like anger, resentment, unforgiveness, fear, low self-esteem and so on.

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4. As we have seen, up until now our power has been insufficient. Where are you going to get the power to change?

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Day 3

5. What things have you done that in hindsight were not the actions of a completely sane person? (Be specific, Who? What? Where? When?) What were the consequences of your 'insanity'?

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6. We all have expectations of others and ourselves. Write down specific examples of where these expectations may have been unrealistic.

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Day 4

7. We make decisions using our hearts and minds, but sometimes we seem to forget to engage our brain. In the past how has acting on impulse, trusting mainly in our own emotions and feelings, got us into trouble? Be specific, Who? What? Where? When? etc.

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8. The novelist D H Lawrence said, "If one could only have two lives, the first one in which to make one's mistakes and the second one in which to profit by them." The fact is we only have one life and up until now most of us have made a bit of a mess of it. The good news that God brings is that there is a second chance. How do you think you get it?

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Day 5

9. Earlier this week you made a list of the areas in your life you might be prepared, at some point, to let God help with. Which of those areas are you now ready to release from your control and hand over to Him? Be specific.

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Congratulations, you have just completed Step 2

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 2

Step 2: We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity

- *“Jesus...spoke up, ‘Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? I’m here inviting outsiders, not insiders - an invitation to a changed life, changed inside and out’”* Luke 5:31-32 – The Message
- *“...anyone who wants to approach God must believe both that he exists and that he cares enough to respond to those who seek him”.* Hebrews 11:6 - The Message
- *“Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honour depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge”.* Psalm 62:5-8 - The Message
- *“God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us”.* Ephesians 3:20-21 - The Message
- *“Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything - and I do mean everything - connected with that old way of life has to go. It’s rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life - a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you”.* Ephesians 4:23 - The Message
- *“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength”.* Philippians 4:13 - NIV
- *“Lead me; teach me; for you are the God who gives me salvation. I have no hope except in you”.* Psalm 25:5 - The Living Bible
- *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear”.* Psalm 46:1 – NIV
- *“My mind and my body may grow weak, but God is my strength; he is all I ever need.”* Psalm 73:26 - GNB
- *“It was so bad we didn’t think we were going to make it. We felt like we’d been sent to death row, that it was all over for us. As it turned out, it was the best thing that could have happened. Instead of trusting in our own strength or wits to get out of it, we were forced to trust God totally— not a bad idea since he’s the God who raises the dead! And he did it, rescued us from certain doom”.* 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 - The Message
- *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”* 2 Corinthians 5:17 - NIV
- *“No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he’ll never let you be pushed past your limit; he’ll always be there to help you come through it”.* 1 Corinthians 10:13 - The Message
- *“God is good, a hiding place in tough times. He recognises and welcomes anyone looking for help, no matter how desperate the trouble”.* Nahum 1:7 - The Message
- *“Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don’t get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes”* Matthew 6:34 - 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.