

# THE NATIONAL ONLINE RECOVERY COURSE

## SESSION SIX

■ 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 6 - Getting Ready

**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 6: We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character

***“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” James 4:10 (NIV) ! “So throw all spoiled virtue and cancerous evil in the garbage. In simple humility, let our gardener, God, landscape you with the Word, making a salvation-garden of your life.” James 1:21 (The Message)***

***“I’ll never forget the trouble, the utter lostness, the taste of ashes, the poison I’ve swallowed. I remember it all—oh, how well I remember— the feeling of hitting the bottom. But there’s one other thing I remember, and remembering, I keep a grip on hope” Lamentations 3:20 (The Message)***

***“People conceived and brought into life by God don’t make a practice of sin. How could they? God’s seed is deep within them, making them who they are.” 1 John 3:9 (The Message)***

### **Topic for thought**

Three weeks ago we started travelling what is probably the most difficult stage of the journey, Step 4. We have been examining some of the entrenched, long-standing resentments and grudges we are holding – along with other character defects - and how they have affected both ourselves and our relationship with others. Last week we looked at how Step 5 frees us from the things in our lives that are enslaving us. When we bring into the light those things we have meticulously shrouded in darkness all our lives they lose their power over us. For most people Step 5 has a deeply energising effect.

This week we are tackling Step 6, which is all about being ready to voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life.

### **The Issue**

The purpose of Step 6 is to get ready to have God remove all our character defects. He will probably do this one defect at a time rather than all in one go, and He will do this in partnership with you. He has given you free will to choose which path to take – He will not force you. We need to be ready and willing to let God make the changes.

### **The Goals**

On completion of Step 6 we should be able to...

- Realise that I can change
- Realise that I can overcome any obstacle that gets in my way
- Realise that God can remove all my shortcomings
- Realise that to change all I have to do is give God my permission to make those changes
- Realise that God is the only hope of change happening

### **The Lies**

With our addiction many of us have only ever known defeat. We have come to believe that lasting change is not possible for us. This is a lie! We can change. God can empower us to do it. The persuasive voice in our head tells us:

- “I can’t help it. I have to do this”
- “I’ll never be able to stop”

- “I’m a naturally volatile person, anger is in my DNA”
- “I am weak, I just don’t have what it takes”
- “God might be interested in others, but not me”

We are getting ready to let God remove our defects of character, but what exactly are they?

Don’t worry, God is not going to remove them against your will. If you are determined to cling on to them nothing in this universe will remove them from you; they will be yours and yours alone forever! If however, you realise the time is coming when you know changes need to be made if your life is going to be any different then this week’s Pause For Thought will help.

Before you begin each day pray the Prayer for Serenity. Be courageous and honest as you face your past. God is with you and He will see you safely through.

## **Day 1-2**

1. Describe a situation in your life now where **Fear** is active. What has this brought into your life that is beneficial? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to give this character defect over to the care of God?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Describe a situation in your life now where **Selfishness** is active. What has this brought into your life that is beneficial? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to give this character defect over to the care of God?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Describe a situation in your life now where **Resentment** is active. What has this brought into your life that is beneficial? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to give this character defect over to the care of God?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Describe a situation in your life now where **Envy** is active. What has this brought into your life that is beneficial? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to give this character defect over to the care of God?

.....

.....

.....

.....



5. Describe a situation in your life now where **Self-will** is active. What has this brought into your life that is beneficial? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to give this character defect over to the care of God?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

6. Describe a situation in your life now where **Dishonesty** is active. What has this brought into your life that is beneficial? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to give this character defect over to the care of God?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

7. Describe a situation in your life now where **Unwarranted Pride** or self-importance is active. What has this brought into your life that is beneficial? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to give this character defect over to the care of God?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. Describe a situation in your life now where **Self-pity** is active. What has this brought into your life that is beneficial? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to give this character defect over to the care of God?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

9. Describe a situation in your life now where **Insecurity** is active. What has this brought into your life that is beneficial? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to give this character defect over to the care of God?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

10. Describe a situation in your life now where **Unwillingness** to take responsibility for your own life is active. What has this brought into your life that is beneficial? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to give this character defect over to the care of God?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

11. God will begin to change us, with our permission, in His own time and way. Sometimes we want to unrealistically rush things. In what area of your life are you looking for a quick fix?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. What are some of the **good** activities you really enjoy? Not your addictive behaviour of choice!

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

13. What are some **healthy** exercise habits that you could start?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

14. Describe any secret **good deeds** that you have done or would like to do.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

15. As God begins to remove our character defects it is important we replace them with **positive changes** in our lifestyle. What are some of the positive changes you plan to make? In your social life? In your family? In your work? In your church? In your spare time?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

16. In recovery it is sometimes difficult to see the positive changes happening in our lives because they only appear gradually. Write down some of the things that you are **grateful** for that have happened since you started this course.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### **Day 5-6**

17. We now need to make our own honest appraisal of our character defects (Yes, it's another inventory!). Character defects do not operate in a vacuum, but express themselves through various patterns of behaviour that are usually evident in our relations with the people around us.

In Steps Four and Five we examined our earlier life and acknowledged the unhelpful nature of many of our character flaws. This Step 6 inventory is looking at our relationships **now**. Is my resentment largely influenced by fear, selfishness, resentment, envy, self-will, dishonesty, unwarranted pride (hubris), self-pity, insecurity and an unwillingness to take responsibility for my own life?

This Inventory allows us to look at those situations where we are currently in conflict with someone and take note of **our part** in them. Over the page is an example you may like to copy.

One of the key bible verses for tackling this Step is Lamentations 3:40 (The Message), *"Let's take a good look at the way we're living and reorder our lives under God."* Take note! It doesn't say let's take a good look at the way they're living.

When filling in the right-hand column ask God to show you what your part in the damaged relationship is. Maybe your child has hurt you because they no longer want to see you. Why don't they want to see you? Have you been over-controlling? Have you never really shown them respect? Have you never apologised for something you should have?

Or what about the spouse that left you? Was it entirely their fault or was it also to do with your unreasonable or uncaring behaviour that in the end forced them to move on? Or what about that job you lost? Was your boss completely difficult and vindictive or did your behaviour or ability give him little alternative but to replace you?

Notice that at no point are we making a judgement on who is right or wrong. It is possible that my financial acumen is greater than my bank manager's, but be that as it may all we are doing here is analysing **our** character faults.

You will notice 'anger' is not in the list, but that's because anger is usually a reaction to fear and we are endeavouring to analyse primary emotions, not secondary ones. We usually get angry when we are fearful that what we want to happen isn't going to; in other words we are not in control of a situation. If the root of our fear can be sorted, the anger problem tends to disappear in due course.

**Example sheet:**

<b>Who are you resenting at the moment and why?</b>	<b>What character defects do I have at the moment that are inflaming the situation?</b>  <i>Fear, selfishness, resentment, envy, self-will, dishonesty, unwarranted pride, self-pity, insecurity and an unwillingness to take responsibility for my own life</i>
<b>Ron – my boss</b> He's an ignorant, lazy  He won't listen to me and never accepts the changes I suggest even though they are the right way forward. I suspect he's now told his boss that I'm a troublemaker and difficult to work with. How does someone like him get to manage a department?	Self-will – I want to get my own way  Pride – I know better than him  Self-pity – I feel unappreciated  Fear and insecurity – I might lose my job now that he has reported me to his boss  Resentment – I would be a better manager and yet nobody can see it
<b>My mum</b>  She only ever thinks of herself. She doesn't really care about me. I wanted to move up north and she's crying all time trying to make me feel guilty. She's always tried to control me. My brother works overseas and has managed to escape her clutches. She says if I'm not around she might as well kill herself.	Self-pity – I feel like a victim  Fear and resentment – She's always trying to control me, I feel trapped, but if I do what I want she may kill herself  Unwilling to take responsibility for my life – It's not unreasonable to live and work wherever I want  Envy – My brother doesn't have to see her anymore !
<b>Bank manager</b>  He has refused my request for a bigger overdraft. How stupid can you get? He must know how much I earn. The guy's a moron. What's it to him anyway; you would think it was his money. I bet he lives in a big house with a tiny mortgage that he got through his own bank	Self-will – I'm not getting my own way  Fear and insecurity – If he doesn't give me the money I can't pay the mortgage this month and I might lose the house  Pride – I think I know more about money than he does ! Envy and resentment – I probably work harder than him so why should he have a big house on a cheap mortgage, which is probably one of his banking perks?

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

**Current Resentment Form:**

<b>Who are you resenting at the moment and why?</b>	<b>What character defects do I have at the moment that are inflaming the situation?</b> <i>Fear, selfishness, resentment, envy, self-will, dishonesty, unwarranted pride, self-pity, insecurity and an unwillingness to take responsibility for my own life</i>

**Day 7**

18. You may like to tackle a more comprehensive list of your character faults and give God permission to begin changing them.

Below are 65 of the most common. Identify your biggest faults and then circle one or two that you would like God to deal with. To an extent we are probably afflicted with all of these at one time or another so just choose the one's that represent your greatest areas of failing.

Abusing others	Fear	Pessimism
Anger	Filthy-mindedness	Prejudice
Arguing	Gluttony	Pride
Arrogance	Gossiping	Recklessness
Boasting	Greed	Revenge
Cheating	Hate	Sarcasm
Closed-mindedness	Hopelessness	Secretiveness
Cold-heartedness	Immodesty	Self-condemnation
Complaining	Impatience	Self-indulgence
Controlling others	Injustice	Self-justification
Corrupt companions	Insincerity	Self-pity
Cowardice	Insulting	Selfishness
Criticizing	Intolerance	Sloth
Dependency	Irresponsibility	Theft
Destructiveness	Jealousy	Thrill-seeking
Deviousness	Laziness	Thoughtlessness
Dishonesty	Lewdness	Uncleanness
Enviousness	Lust	Vulgarity
Exaggeration	Lying	Waste
Excess	Meddling	
Fanaticism	Miserliness	
Favouritism	Negative thinking	

**Congratulations, you have completed Step 6**

## 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 6

### Step 6: We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character

- *"When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you...Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs"* Jonah 2:7-8 – New International Version
- *"...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"* 2 Corinthians 5:17 - NIV
- *"You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy..."* Psalm 30:11 - NIV
- *"Open up before God, keep nothing back; he'll do whatever needs to be done."* Psalm 37:5 - The Message
- *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a person remains in me and I in them, they will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."* John 15:5 - NIV
- *"So roll up your sleeves, put your mind in gear, be totally ready to receive the gift that's coming when Jesus arrives. Don't lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil, doing just what you feel like doing. You didn't know any better then; you do now. As obedient children, let yourselves be pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness. God said, 'I am holy; you be holy.'" 1 Peter 1:13-16 - The Message*
- *"When a defiling evil spirit is expelled from someone, it drifts along through the desert looking for an oasis, some unsuspecting soul it can bedevil. When it doesn't find anyone, it says, 'I'll go back to my old haunt.' On return it finds the person spotlessly clean, but vacant. It then runs out and rounds up seven other spirits more evil than itself and they all move in, whooping it up. That person ends up far worse off than if he'd never gotten cleaned up in the first place."* Matthew 12:43-44 - The Message
- *"O loving and kind God, have mercy. Have pity on me and take away the awful stain of my transgressions. Oh, wash me, cleanse me from this guilt. Let me be pure again."* Psalm 51:1-2 - The Living Bible

## 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.*