

THE NATIONAL ONLINE RECOVERY COURSE

SESSION TEN

■ 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 10 - Cleaning House

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 10: We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it

“So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offence. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love.

It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.”

Colossians 3:12-14 (The Message)

“Don't be so naive and self-confident...You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else. Forget about self-confidence; it's useless. Cultivate God-confidence.”

1 Corinthians 10:12 (The Message)

“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 1:14-16 (The Message)

Topic for thought

Today we start the last three steps, which are sometimes known as ‘the maintenance steps’. This phrase infers that having completed the first nine steps we are now in a much healthier place and now, in order to maintain our recovery we simply need to apply Steps 10, 11 and 12. In some rehabs they call Step 10 ‘Relapse Prevention’.

The Issue

The purpose of Step 10 is that in continuing to write a personal inventory and, when we are wrong, promptly admitting it and apologising to the person concerned we learn to detect and prevent relapse. By facing in truth the secrets and lies that confront us on a daily basis we will keep ourselves on the level path of recovery.

The Goals

On completion of Step 10 we should be able to...

- Realise that although relapse is always a possibility, I don't have to!
- Realise that when I am doing well it is then I am more likely to get it all wrong
- Realise daily personal inventory will help prevent relapse
- Realise that having the humility to immediately accept responsibility for, and apologise promptly for my mistakes will help prevent relapse
- Realise I can see relapse coming before I actually give into the specific temptation
- Realise it is possible to say **NO** to the temptation
- Realise that certain places, situations and people may now need to be ‘off limits’ for good

The Lie:

The lies we believe feed off the secrets we hold. As long as we keep secrets we can never have confidence in our recovery. There will always be that persuasive, lying voice in our heads tempting us to make a bad choice. The golden rule is: Confess the secret, expose the lie, and then get up and go on again. Let me give you a quick example of the relationship between secrets, lies and truth:

- **Secret:** “I gave into temptation and no one knows”
- **Lie:** “If I keep it to myself then I can do it again”
- **Truth:** “God says, ‘Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed.’” James 5:16

It's not how many times we fall down that matters, it's how many times we get back up and go on! Our motto is, *"We fall down, and we get up again!"*

"We often suffer, but we are never crushed. Even when we don't know what to do, we never give up. In times of trouble, God is with us, and when we are knocked down, we get up again." 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

So the kinds of lies we need to listen out for are things like:

- "Once more won't hurt"
- "I'll never understand why I keep on relapsing"
- "I've fallen too often to get up again"
- "It's no use, God can only forgive me so many times"
- "Even God can't forgive me for what I've just done"

Remember the Motto: "WE FALL DOWN AND WE GET UP AGAIN!"

If we have diligently worked our way through the first nine Steps we now have a structurally sound life with solid foundations. Daily cleaning is all that is required from now on. This week we start the last three Steps, which are sometimes called 'the maintenance Steps'.

What this infers, quite rightly, is the underlying idea that having completed the previous nine Steps we are now in a much healthier place and in order to 'maintain' our recovery we simply need to apply Steps 10, 11 and 12 in order to keep our lives healthily ticking over.

Before you begin each day read the verses at the top of this section and also pray the Prayer for Serenity. Also pray that God Himself will not only show you the negative things you have said and done today, but also remind you of the good things you have said and done. When we see we have been wrong we need to ask him for his grace to apologise as soon as we possibly can – without excuses!

Day 1-7

1. Most people find that fifteen minutes at the end of the day is a good time to do their Step 10 work.

First pray to God that he will help bring into your mind all the events in the day, the people you have met, the things you have said and done, the things you have not said and done, any conflicts that may have arisen.

Then answer the following five questions:

1) *What good did I do today?*

2) *What did I do or say that hurt someone today?*

3) *To whom do I need to apologise?*

4) *What did I learn from both the good and bad things I did and said today?*

5) *When I acted badly was it due to Fear? Resentment? Self-pity? Greed? Selfishness? Unwarranted Pride? The need to be in control and have power over someone else? Promoting myself at another's expense?*

Remember in all this Paul's words in Romans 8:1 (NIV), "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." The object of this exercise is not to make ourselves feel bad, but to be free!

2. If you have hurt someone today with your words or actions, or by not saying or doing something that you should have, write down to whom you need apologise and admit you were wrong. If you can do it straight away, in person or on the phone, do it now.

If for some reason this is not possible then write down when you can do it tomorrow. Don't make any excuses. Don't try and tell yourself tomorrow that it doesn't matter anymore because, "They probably won't remember". Just do it.

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3. If you are in any doubt about what action you should take then talk it over with your Sponsor (at a civilised hour if it's late in the evening!)

4. If something comes to mind from your past that you didn't include in your Step 4 inventory or your Step 8 amends list also jot that down now and discuss it with your Sponsor at the earliest opportunity.

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Repeat this every evening from now on. We are not doing this because we wish to be declared a saint. We are doing this because we don't want to return to our addicted life. We want life and we want it to the full, and the alternative road is one that leads to death.

Congratulations! You have completed Step 10

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 10

Step 10: We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it

- *“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me...Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place...Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me...The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” Psalm 51 – NIV*
- *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” Matthew 7:24-27 - NIV*
- *“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” 1 Corinthians 10:12 - NIV*
- *“Let’s take a good look at the way we’re living and reorder our lives under God.” Lamentations 3:40 - The Message*
- *“If we claim that we’re free of sin, we’re only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is errant nonsense. On the other hand, if we admit our sins – make a clean breast of them – he won’t let us down; he’ll be true to himself. He’ll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing. If we claim that we’ve never sinned, we out-and-out contradict God – make a liar out of him. A claim like that only shows off our ignorance of God.” 1 John 1:8-10 - 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.