

## **Ten Steps**

### ***(Long Form)***

- 1. We accepted that our lives had become impossible to manage, and we could not control our addiction.**

We came to realize this through a personal experience. Many of us had to hit rock bottom first. This step removes our ego. We finally saw the trail of wreckage that we had left in the wake of our active addiction. We saw how our lives were slowly deteriorating right in front of our own eyes. We admitted that we had been seeing this for quite some time, looking for ways out of this obsession, but had not been able to find any on our own. We came to the realization that this was something that we needed help with, that we could not control our addiction.

Many of us had gone through some of the worst experiences in our lives before we took the first step in this program. We had fought many battles with our addiction. Finally, we recognized we had a problem that was affecting our lives and chose to fight to be free from our addiction.

Willingness and strength are keys to this step. We need to believe in things that you never did before. We need to be willing to try anything to get sober and stay sober. We need to be willing, to believe that using the tools given to us, we can restore our lives to the way they were before our addiction took hold and back to a state of sanity that has been long desired. And we need to be doing this with strength and courage.

While still in active addiction, most of us tried to manage our lives as best we could. We failed miserably, over and over again, but at the time we just didn't recognize it.

Finally we faced some battles along the way that we just couldn't win. We fought the same battle again and again expecting that just maybe one time something was going to be different. That something never came.

In other words, we were defeated.

We all must come to the admission of defeat before we can defeat anything ourselves.

**2. We were convinced that we could bring our lives back to balance with self-love, discipline, hard work, and community.**

The four pillars of Addicts Anonymous are self-love, discipline, hard work and community. I believe if you work on these four areas and keep trying to continuously improve them you will be able to get sober and stay sober. These are the pillars of our program and the foundation upon which to build your new life.

We have to take a hard look at ourselves. Our lives have become so out of control, that they are nearly unrecognizable. We worked hard at nothing and had no discipline whatsoever. We had low self-esteem and no belief in ourselves. We neglected to practice self-love.

We continued to abuse ourselves through our addiction. We tried to seek out, and maintain a state of mind that was unattainable. We thought "just one more time." We believed this time something was going to be different. We tried the same thing, over and over again. It was always the same. It was insane. No matter how hard we tried, we never attained that type of high we had so romanticized the first time we used.

We had no belief in anything. We had no belief in ourselves and no belief that anything could save us from our obsession. Our lack of belief and structure led us down a path of insanity. We saw no way out for quite a long time.

Belief is the main takeaway from this step. You have to believe that anything is possible. You have to believe if you work these steps you can restore yourself to a sane way of living. With self-love, discipline, hard work, and community anything is possible.

**3. We were ready and willing to abandon and no longer live the lifestyle we had been living.**

We are finally facing the fact that the lifestyle we had been living, had brought us closer and closer to our bottom and possibly death. The unfortunate truth of the matter is that many of us must hit rock bottom before we change. The lifestyle we have been living for so long is slowly taking us down the wrong path.

For years many of us have been avoiding the issue. We tried and tried again and many of us have failed. We were not only addicted to

our addiction of choice we were also addicted to the lifestyle that came along with it.

We see that something needs to change. We recognize it is not just one thing that needs changing but a few things. We must change everything that went along with the lifestyle we are now abandoning in favor of sobriety. In this step you are ready to walk away from the life you have been living and take the next step in your life towards sobriety.

**4. Made a conscious effort to apply discipline and hard work in all aspects of our lives on a daily basis.**

Here we make the conscious decision to really examine our life and areas we need to apply more discipline and hard work. For many, we have lived a life where we were always trying to get by with the least amount of effort possible. Here we identify areas that we need to handle with more discipline and to do this on a daily basis.

To make this decision is not an easy one. It will take much dedication on your part. Each day for the rest of your life you will make a conscious effort to live a disciplined life. Not only do we handle this with discipline we also work hard in everything that we do. This is something that you cannot give up on.

This is not the easiest of accomplishments but this is something absolutely necessary in your recovery.

**5. Through spirituality and meditation, we were determined to improve contact with our inner selves.**

The benefits of prayer and meditation cannot be measured. It is vital for self-reflection. For those on the religious side having a relationship with God can be an unmeasurable tool in your tool belt. For those who are not religious this step can help you take a look deep down inside yourself to find an inner strength to help you through your time of need. Both aspects of this step are equally important as not everyone uses the same methods to get and stay sober.

We must make a conscious effort to get in touch with our inner selves. This is something that ought to be done daily. I believe spiritual maintenance is something that is so extremely important to our recovery.

**6. We confess all the things we feel we have done wrong to others and to ourselves**

Some of us may have been holding onto many secrets for a long time. These secrets have been eating away at us. This step helps to clear the conscious. It lifts a weight off of our shoulders that may have been building up for years.

We must finally confront the things we have been doing. We must take a clear look inside ourselves to see what we have buried deep within.

We must bring these things to the surface and admit them to another human being. This can be hard. Absolute trust in the person you are coming clean to is essential. Without this, your recovery will be stunted.

**7. We put right all the wrongs committed to others and ourselves.**

A huge part of this step takes willingness and compassion. We must see that the lifestyle we were living, was harmful not only to ourselves but also to those around us. Recognizing this helps us to realize how our addiction has affected those closest to us.

We must take this step with compassion towards others and ourselves. This step also requires bravery and humility. We are now willing to look those people we have wronged in the eyes and apologize for the wrongs we committed against them.

We need to also examine the wrongs we committed against ourselves. This can be just as important as apologizing to others. We must put right all wrongs in our lives, whether against ourselves or others.

**8. Took a deep look inside ourselves at all our deficiencies and tried to correct these the best we could.**

We take this step to clear our consciousness of all the things we feel we have been doing wrong for quite some time. Many of us have been lying, cheating and stealing for a long time. We need to examine our deficiencies and really see the things that need changing in our lives. This step is meant to identify all the things that need correcting in your life.

**9. Continued with daily self-reflection and when we recognized a wrong in any of our actions we sought to correct it.**

Some of us have some inner turmoil that we are working are way through. This step is meant to keep ourselves clean. This is also to help maintain healthy relationships with those around us. This keeps us honest in all of our affairs. We must continue to take a daily inventory. If we hold onto things that we did wrong and don't let them out this can build up to anger and resentment which are the enemies of an addict.

Addiction is a lifelong journey. Every day you ought to look at yourself and see what things need changing in your life. Each and every one of us has things that we have needed to change or abstain from completely. Part of this change you are making is to also recognize when you have wronged someone in any way and apologize to them as needed.

Self-reflection is absolutely vital in our aim to stay sober. It is something that must be practiced every day.

**10. Having achieved our sobriety we tried to bring this message to all suffering from addiction and help them in any way we can.**

We spread the message that there is a way out. That there is a way to achieve sobriety and a way to maintain you're sobriety. We carry the message that addiction does not sentence you to a lifetime of suffering. There is a way to maintain a healthy and sober lifestyle.

This step is not just about helping others. This step is also about helping yourself and keeping yourself sober. Without this you are of no use to others in their time of need, you need to handle your own business before you can attempt to help others. This is one of the most important things to remember.

Once you are able to care for yourself the correct way you can then turn your attention outwards toward others. Tenth-step work really keeps you focused on not only others' sobriety but also on your own.

In Addicts Anonymous there is a saying that we live by: "By caring for others, I care for myself."

