

The Four Pillars Of The Addicts

Anonymous

By Jim Rachels



The Four Pillars Of Addicts Anonymous

Step two of the Addicts Anonymous program is - ***“We were convinced we could bring our loves back to balance with self-love, discipline, hard work and community.”***

These are the four pillars of the Addicts Anonymous program. These are the things you must come to believe in and rely on to get sober and stay sober. Each one has its own place in the foundation of this group and this program. Each one is equally important and there is no correct order.

Anything strong has a solid foundation. This program is no different. We have a foundation on which we build upon. We work the program and work our way through the steps that rest upon the four pillars until we have the strength to move forward in our sobriety.

Here are the four pillars of the Addicts Anonymous program:

1. Self-Love
2. Discipline
3. Hard Work
4. Community

These four pillars have been developed with a lot of thought behind them and their individual purposes. With these pillars in place, many things open up to you and become possible. Things you may never have imagined being possible before. If you can follow our steps while remembering the pillars of our program you will be able to get sober and maintain your sobriety that much easier.

The first thing here is self-love and without that you have nothing to build upon. It is the first pillar for a reason.

Self-Love

Self-love, what is it? How do we get it? Where do we find it? And how do we put it into practice?

So let's start off by answering the first question. What is self-love? The dictionary defines self-love as "regard for one's own well-being and happiness."

Also, love is not necessarily just about how you feel but is more about how you act. Anyone can always have the best intentions in mind but it isn't until that is out into action that we can then see it.

So how do we apply this to our lives? I personally think that we need to start with the simple things, grooming and self-care, eat a healthy diet and always be looking out for our mental well-being. As we start to slip, many of us have a tendency to stop caring for ourselves properly, which can be a warning sign.

So what should self-love mean to us? And one of the most important questions is why is this important to us addicts?

I think what this means for most of us is just keeping up with a basic level of physical and mental upkeep. Neglect of self-love and self-care can also be an indicator of a pending binge or relapse. Many people that have stress in their lives tend to neglect themselves and when we neglect ourselves we are way more likely to seek out things that are no good for us. So for many of us keeping track of these things can be a major factor in our recovery.

Something else you can do is not continuously compare yourself with others. This can lead to your thought pattern going the wrong way and taking the focus away from yourself. It is important to get along with others and be as kind as possible to people. I once heard if you try to please everyone, you're not going to please anyone. I think that is a great quote to remember. Your goal is to stay true to who you are as long as you are doing good things. Again try not to care so much what others are thinking about you.

Also, remember to be easy on yourself. Mistakes happen and that's ok. Those who are not forgiving of themselves can tend not to practice self-love as those who do. Remember that.

Also take an inventory of all your current relationships. Take a look at spouses, family, friends and co-workers and see which relationships you can classify as toxic. You need to either work hard with these other people to repair these relationships or the only other thing you can do would be to cut ties with whomever you have deemed toxic. Don't be afraid to let go. It might be scary in the beginning to let go of some of your relationships. Some people need to go as far as leaving their spouses for the sake of their sobriety. This is an incredibly hard thing to imagine doing for some of us. A lot of us have co-dependency issues which I've noticed seems to be something common among us addicts. Another thing that is important in self-love is that you have to put yourself first. If you worry about everyone else, their feeling, what they're thinking and the like will lead to you neglecting yourself and your own well-being.

Another question asked at the beginning is where to we find it? Well, that's a simple yet complicated answer. What I mean by that is that if you were to ask me this question I would answer it you find it deep inside yourself. So from the way I said it, it might seem so easy to find it but it's not. It's going to take a lot of hard work to find it, for some it might be more difficult than others. It will take hard work and discipline to truly find what you are looking for. You can also use the backing power of your community. I can't even begin to explain how important community is. To have like-minded individuals that have also shared a lot of the same experience while in active addiction. This can be immeasurable as far as the benefits of having a community.

Sometimes neglect of self-love can lead to depression. In depression, we usually develop low self-esteem. But we must address what to do if we are having low self-esteem issues. I think practicing self-affirmation can help. It's been shown that people battling with self-esteem issues may have trouble overcoming negative thoughts or feelings and therefore turn to outside substances or compulsive activities to change the way they feel. And this obviously leads to substance abuse or compulsive behavior.

Some people with low self-esteem also typically will have issues with depression and anxiety. These mental health issues can be a huge trigger when dealing with recovery. We must keep an eye on these things. But self-love can really help to work with these issues we are facing. Being more gentle, compassionate and kind to ourselves lets us do the same to others and truly wish them well. So many forget that in order to extend kindness and love you must first feel that for yourself. This just seems to be the truth of the matter plain and simple so if we want to move along in life self-love is essential in our journey of recovery.

Discipline

Discipline is something that many of us lacked in active addiction. We had nothing in the form of structure or discipline. Our lack of discipline almost certainly tied into our addictions. It almost certainly had a direct influence on our behavior. This then tied into losing any type of structure we had in our lives. Without either of these things, most of our lives are headed down a dark alley. Discipline is something essential to our recovery.

Now it is time to change our lives and turn them around. We need to add discipline with the other tools that we are being equipped with to fight this battle with addiction. Using this alongside the other tools we develop while working this program will help you grow. In sobriety, we are all given a toolbelt in which to fight addiction. It is up to us which tools we choose to equip ourselves with and use in our battle against addiction.

Discipline can be the difference between being stuck in addiction and being in recovery. It should be taken very seriously. If we are to take on the Addicts Anonymous 10-Step program you will need to use it in the structure it was designed and you will also need to apply discipline if you are to make it to the end goal of sobriety. So this program is designed to help get both of these things back in your life and a reason to use them daily.

Discipline is something that can truly put our life on a trajectory never imagined by us before. With discipline so many doors that were closed to us before start to open, slowly but surely they open.

Having discipline should help keep your life in order. As recovering addicts, we need organization in our life. Many of us haven't taken care of these responsibilities in a long time and now we need to. We must handle all the new aspects of our lives with the utmost care and discipline. This is how we grow and move forward on that trajectory.

Let's talk about how to practice discipline in your everyday life. The first thing I would suggest is to write down you're daily goals for the day somewhere you can see them easily. Make sure you review them each and every morning when you start your day. Maybe at night take a few minutes to review your day and what you think you need to practice a little harder on. Then make the list of goals for the next day. I would also learn your

weaknesses and stay on top of them. Each day put one on your daily list and work on it and try to improve in this area. If you don't know you're weaknesses it is impossible to improve on things that need it.

Also, remember why you started this and why you continue to do this. The first thing is you should remember that the first person you need to do this for is yourself. But also think of some of the other reasons you are getting sober and why you need to remember them. Are you doing this for your family? Maybe a particular family member? Any other relationships possibly? Make sure you remember why you decided to take this route in the first place and always have it in the back of you're mind with everything you do. Also, remember when you start to set these goals to take your time and start with small goals. Examine your list and see which goals and tasks may take a lot more effort and put those off until the end. You are newly sober and this will help you along the way. Start with small steps as slow and steady wins the race.

In the end discipline can be a huge part of our recovery or our relapse should we fail to find any. We must start with the little things. We must start with little tasks that we can accomplish daily and start building a new way of life.

Hard Work

Let's break down and explain each word alone. When you look up hard work in the dictionary the adverb of hard is - "with a great deal of effort." The adjective is - "solid, firm, and rigid; not easily broken, bent, or pierced." And this is absolutely one hundred percent what you have to do. Apply a great deal of effort into your sobriety. Many of us worked hard and went to great lengths to go out and get our fix. We must now focus this energy on our sobriety. We must absolutely put a great deal of effort into everything we do in our sobriety. No matter how small the task may be you need to always put the utmost effort into it. And we must be solid and firm with this. We must persevere through all the ups and downs of the journey of sobriety. If we face an obstacle we stay solid, we stay firm and we put in a great deal of effort into solving whatever problem lies ahead. In other words, we work hard at everything we do in this life.

The task alone of staying sober is a daunting one. But we must work this properly and most of all work this hard. This is the first task you are doing in a new life. Nothing we work in these steps is easy. And the reason is you get things you imagined never even possible while in active addiction start happening along the way as you progress through our program. As you progress through our ten steps things become just a little bit easier. But no matter how much easier these things become to you you must still put in one hundred percent effort in your life and everything you do.

Most of us while in active addiction worked hard at only one thing - getting our fix. We must now learn to take that energy and focus it elsewhere. So how do we do this? I say we do this with discipline and self-love. We use the other pillars in this program to help in this pillar. All of the pillars are interconnected.

Here are some ways to work hard every day of your life. Something to help along the way is to break your larger goals into smaller tasks. This will help with organization. Also staying focused will help to take on these tasks with your full effort. Another way of keeping up with applying hard work is to remember why you are doing this. Continue to remember your "why".

Without hard work, nothing in this program will work. You must work hard at discipline, self-love and building a community if this program is to work for you. You cannot put in anything less than your full effort.

Community

Community is something that every one of us strives to be part of, it's human nature. For us addicts community is especially essential for our survival and our recovery. We all want to feel included and be part of something where others get what we are going through and have been there themselves.

Some of us just coming out of rehab don't have much of a support group in place yet. It is really important that we try and build up the proper support in place around us for when we are in need in the beginning days of our recovery. A community can be vital in our recovery, especially in those first few months of sobriety. That is why it is usually suggested you try to attend ninety meetings in ninety days. It is not only for the meetings and their content but it is also about exchanging numbers and building a community around you of like-minded individuals. It's always good to have a few phone numbers you can call when you are in need. There are not many settings available for us addicts so in-person and online meetings are the best things for people fresh into their sobriety. It's not just about removing people, places and things from our life it's also about adding new people, places and things into our life and surrounding ourselves with the right people in the right environment.

Also a long time ago the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous borrowed from other groups including religious ones and came up with "sharing" with others. This is in essence very similar to giving a confession. It was about getting honest with yourself and then another person. Bill W. discovered that for some reason when one drunk spoke to another it had much more of an impact especially when he would start his conversations with his story. Most related to each other in one way or another and then their community grew to what it is today.

So where should a newcomer start when looking to build a new community around themselves? I say the first thing you should do is look up your local AA, NA or whatever support group applies to you. Check out the meetings. In-person meetings are a great way to meet people and start to build that support structure. At the same time go online and look for support groups such as ours. There is a community to be made from both approaches. These are things the founders of AA never ever imagined and I think would take full advantage of the technology.

You must be patient when starting in a new group. It might take you a little while until you're comfortable enough to share. It also might take some of the members in the group to also get used to you. But once these things are overcome there are typically great relationships to be had at these meetings.

With all that being said building community is something that is always an ever-growing part of our lives. This is not something you attempt once and never try again. You are always looking to have as much of a support system in place as possible.

So as far as community goes I see it as necessary for our long-term goal of sobriety. When we are in a dark place and feel we have no one to turn to we should be able to pull up a list of names from the community we have built around us to come to help us in our times of need.

Another thing to remember is you are also there to help your community. Community is not just about receiving help from others but about offering help to others. No matter how much time you have under your belt you can always be there with an open ear when someone else needs to vent. You can still share your experience with that person and maybe relate on that level. There are many ways of helping and many ways of receiving help when needed.