

No-Dice

Safety Net to Recovery



Gambling Addiction Workbook *For Men and Women Problem Gamblers*

Marcy Nichols

BA, CADCI, CGACII, NCGCII

Updated May 2016

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Acknowledgements

I have had the pleasure to have the help of many people to put this book together. First of all I thank the clients themselves, both gamblers and drug and alcohol clients that helped me see and understand more of the pathology than I already knew. I need to thank all of those that have worked hard in the field of gambling addiction in education and studies in the last 20 years. Without all their hard work, the professional gambling addiction counseling field would not be where it is today, and that includes me. Many of these professionals will be referenced in the back of the book for their theories and models that help educate the gamblers about addiction, and give them tools to successfully stop gambling.

There are others who deserve a special note for grasping onto my excitement and helping to get my book off the ground. Without their input and editing, it would not be as thorough as it is. A special thanks goes to Michael Bean, Executive Director of *emergence Addiction and Behavioral Therapies*. After I mentioned writing this book, he became very excited, and really helped me get it going and “out there.” I also want to thank my fellow gambling addiction counselors working in the Meridian Program at *emergence*. We have learned and worked together, and supported each other, for many years. These counselors have helped with this book directly and indirectly. Thank you Ronda, for if you hadn’t told me the story of your brother, I would have never found out about gambling addiction, and thank you, Lucille, who told me that I would write this book, even though I didn’t believe her. Lastly, I would like to thank everyone in my life for putting up with the obsession that is this book. It is all I thought and talked about for many months.

I saw a need to have a gambling addiction workbook in regular terminology, not in clinical terminology, so that it will be easier for people to understand how to find recovery by increasing their self-awareness in layman’s terms. I believe education is half of what it takes to win the battle.

As I learn more about this terrible addiction, from clients, professionals and experience, I am excited to share the knowledge and ideas expressed in this book with you.

Thank you, everyone! I hope that this book goes out and helps at least one gambler find his/her way into the safety net, and live again!

Marcy Nichols,
BA, CADC I, CGAC II, NCGC II

Cunning, baffling, powerful, sneaky and patient.

PART ONE: ABOUT PROBLEM GAMBLING



I believe in myself to accomplish what I need, but am humble enough to ask for help.

Chapter 1

What is Problem Gambling?



Problem gambling is gambling behavior which causes disruptions in any major area of life: psychological, physical, social, or vocational.

Having been a professional addictions counselor in both gambling and chemical dependency (alcohol and drugs) has taught me the value of education and the struggle that addiction is for some people.

Addiction is something that has been in and around my personal life for as long as I can remember.

This workbook comes from a passion I found while involved in the gambling addictions field. The years I spent in education and counseling of addiction in the state of Oregon has changed me as a person, and my hope is that this workbook will do the same for you.

Definitions:

• To risk money or something of value on the outcome of an unpredictable chance event or contest.

(Behind the 8-ball, Linda Berm and Mary-Ellen Siegel, 1998)

• Any betting or wagering, for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance or "skill" constitutes gambling.

(Gamblers Anonymous)

I want to start this workbook by saying why I decided to write it. It comes from my frustration at the system's failure to help those in need, and from my ability to teach and help people with this problem that is devastating their lives and their families.

What took my passion to another level was a research project for my bachelor's degree on the co-morbidity (dual addiction) of gambling addiction with drug and alcohol addiction. In other words, I studied a group of clients who were already in outpatient treatment at

emergence (ACES) in Oregon for drugs and alcohol, to find out how many had co-occurring gambling problems. The results of my study were that 34% of those surveyed had this dual diagnosis of alcohol and gambling problems.

By the time you complete this workbook, you will have gained enough education and knowledge and skills to help you change the areas in your life you want to change, and maybe even change areas that you didn't know needed changing!

By the time you complete this workbook, you will have gained enough education and knowledge and skills to help you change the areas in your life you want to change, and maybe even change areas that you didn't know needed changing! My belief is that, with the proper education and tools

given, you will be able to see and understand the addiction, and other areas in your life that are causing you problems. Gambling addiction doesn't start all by itself, there are many factors that contribute, and I will share these later in the workbook.

When it is all said and done, only you can take responsibility for your life. Only you have control of your path, and some things in life are worth the struggle to achieve; I believe this is one of those things.

The first part of the book will walk you through gambling addiction, what it is, whether or not you have a problem, and how much of a problem it is. It will also give you tools on how to manage control or stop gambling altogether. When you are done with this part, you will have a better understanding, and many tools and coping skills to deal with the gambling problem. The second part goes into the

Gambling has been around since the dawn of man, and has been a problem behavior for many men and women since that time.

other areas in your life that may or may not contribute to the gambling problem. I believe that anyone can benefit from lessons departed in the second part including sections on relationships, communication, stress, anger, grief, and loss, just to name a few areas.

Professional counselors and therapists, including myself, have found that, when treating gamblers, therapy is not and cannot be only about the addiction itself. The human psyche is much more complex than that. Every area of our life affects how we feel, and how we react to our daily lives and to those around us.

I have chosen theories, models, and ideas that I have used in my counseling experience successfully, and that have helped many change their lives. It has taken many, experienced professionals to come up with some of these ideas and techniques to help those that are in need, and wanting the help. Some of these will benefit you and others will not. All I ask is that you remain open to explore all areas fully to see if you can benefit. Work through all the worksheets, and you may be surprised at what you can learn about yourself and others. On that note, let's begin by understanding problem and pathological gambling.

I Am Hope

**I am not a success, by no means at all.
But what I am is hope.
For if you know anything about me,
And the things I have gone through in my life,
You'd see more downs than ups.**

**I've taken the downs and put them aside
To make my life richer.
By believing in myself I have been able
To achieve things that
I'd never been able to do.**

**So if you look at me,
Don't see success. See hope.
If my life shows you anything,
It is that you can make it.**

(Bill O. Recovering Gambler)

The gentleman who wrote the poem you just read spent many years of his life gambling and lost everything because of it. What he found in recovery was that he had a talent for writing poetry that he didn't know about until he cleared his head from thoughts of gambling. He has now written many poems, and is in the process of having them published.

"It is a success story in your recovery when first trying to quit gambling, when you make it through one minute, or one hour, let alone one day, without gambling."

Understanding Problem and Pathological Gambling

Over the years, health professionals have discussed and debated various terms associated with problem gambling. Labels have varied from “pathological gambling” and “compulsive gambling” to “gambling addiction” and “disordered gambling”. In 2013, the fifth edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) was published. Mental health providers look to the DSM for diagnostic criteria they use when working with insurance providers for treatment reimbursement. The condition previously named pathological gambling was renamed gambling disorder and classified in the category “Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders.” Prior to the publication of the DSM-5, the condition was categorized as an impulse control disorder.

The Gamblers Anonymous “Combo” book (pg. 11) defines the characteristics of a compulsive gambler as having *“the inability and unwillingness to accept reality;” that is where the escape into a dream world of gambling comes into play. “Gamblers have emotional insecurity;”* a compulsive gambler finds that he or she is emotionally comfortable only when in “action.” It is not uncommon to hear a Gamblers Anonymous member say something like: “The only place I really feel like I belonged was sitting at the poker table. There I felt secure and comfortable. No great demands were made upon me. I knew I was destroying myself, yet at the same time, I had a certain sense of security.”

There are different reasons behind each individual’s gambling problem. For some it is *Immaturity*; a desire to have all good things in life without any great effort on their part seems to be the common character pattern of problem gamblers. Many Gamblers Anonymous members accept the fact that they were unwilling to grow up. Subconsciously, they felt that they could avoid mature responsibility by gambling and so the struggle to escape responsibility finally became a subconscious obsession.

STATISTICS:

➤ **Based on the 2015 Oregon Adult Gambling Behaviors Survey, 2.1 % of Adult Oregonians are estimated to experience moderate levels of problems leading to some negative consequences and another 0.5% experience severe negative consequences and a possible loss of control. These rates suggest that just over 83,000 adults have a gambling problem.**

➤ **Adolescents: In a 2008 survey of Oregon adolescents, 1.3% of scored as problem gamblers. Another 4.6% of Oregon adolescents score as at-risk gamblers.**

➤ **Older adults over 55: a 2001 Oregon prevalence study reported that 1.2% of older adults were problem or pathological gamblers.**

➤ **There are high rates of alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, anti-social personality disorder, and mood disorders, associated with problem gambling.**

Many gamblers have what is described as “high ego and low self-esteem.” What this means is that their insides don’t match their outsides. There may be low self-esteem inside, but they will outwardly show to others a “big shot” full of confidence and power. The compulsive gambler is willing to do anything (often of an anti-social nature) to maintain the image that he or she wants others to see. There is a lot of evidence supporting the theory that a great number of compulsive/disordered gamblers gamble to escape uncomfortable feelings or thoughts. This seems most often the case with those that have experienced a traumatic event at some time in their life or for those that are going through a challenging life transition such as being out of work, having been recently injured or ill, losing a relationship, or moving to a new place. For many of these people, they found gambling helped them cope with a difficulty then as they gambled more and more their gambling became their biggest problem.

There are two main types of gamblers: the “action” gambler and the “escape” gambler. The GA Combo book talks more about the action gambler, the gambler looking for excitement. The escape gambler uses gambling as a way to escape from life stressors or pain, and is not necessarily the anti-social person described elsewhere. These are gamblers who tend to like the hypnotic effects of the video poker machines and the slots, where there is no personal competition.

Now we will explore how much of a problem gambling is in your life by taking three assessments. The first assessment instrument is based on the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for Gambling Disorder. The second is a popular screening tool used by many professionals, and the third is a questionnaire used by Gamblers Anonymous. These assessments are only an indicator of what level you’re gambling at, whether you are a Problem Gambler or possibly a Compulsive/Disordered Gambler. Depending on the results of these tests, and

MORE STATISTICS:

According to the University of New York, some of the more prevalent gambling trends show:

- **The likelihood of developing a gambling addiction increases 23-fold for people affected by alcohol use disorders**
- **34 percent of those who seek treatment for gambling addiction exhibit symptoms of PTSD**
- **Over 80 percent of American adults gamble on a yearly basis**

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG).

- **15 percent of Americans gamble at least once per week.**
- **All but two states have some form of legalized gambling, and 43 states have lotteries.**
- **Approximately two to three percent of Americans meet the criteria for problem gambling. That’s around 6 million adults and about a half million teens.**
- **Approximately 6 percent of college students in America have a gambling problem.**

after going through this workbook, you may find that you need more help than this book can give you. Please, by all means, call your local gambling helpline to find a treatment/education center near you, and take this book there with you immediately. *Or, call the:*

U.S. National Problem Gambling Helpline: 1-800-522-4700
Canada: 1-888-391-1111.

If you have recently felt, or are now feeling, suicidal because of your gambling, stop everything and reach out for help and support from your local crisis line, treatment agencies, or police. It is not unusual for gamblers to feel so hopeless and helpless because of gambling addiction that suicide is contemplated. In fact, very high percentages (some say up to 70%) of gamblers have had suicidal thoughts when entering treatment. This is an addiction that can cause you to lose everything, including family, job, home, children, life savings, and self-respect. I have experienced the wonder of seeing many clients come into counseling feeling suicidal and leaving treatment feeling hopeful, empowered, and embracing their life and recovery.

“He who covers up his disease can never be cured.” Ethiopian Proverb

Chapter 2

Assessments

SYMPTOMS OF PROBLEM GAMBLING

DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria: Gambling Disorder

From the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (section 312.31).

A. Persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as indicated by the individual exhibiting four (or more) of the following in a 12-month period::

- Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement.
- Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
- Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling.
- Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., having persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble).
- Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).
- After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even (“chasing” one’s losses).
- Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.
- Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling.
- Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling

To Score: Add total number of boxes checked. If you checked four or more you likely have a diagnosable problem. The below matches scores with problem severity.

Mild: 4–5 criteria met. Moderate: 6–7 criteria met. Severe: 8–9 criteria met

South Oaks Gambling Screen

Lesieur and Blume, 1987

1. Please indicate which of the following types of gambling you have done in your lifetime. For each type, mark one answer: "not at all", "less than once a week", Or "once a week or more".

Not at All	Less than once a week	Once a week or more		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a.	Play cards for money
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b.	Bet on horses, dogs, or other animals (at OTB, the track or with a bookie)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	c.	Bet on sports (parlay cards, with bookies or at Jai Lai Court)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	d.	Play dice games (including craps, over and under or other dice games) for money or drinks, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	e.	Gambled in a casino (legal or otherwise)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	f.	Played bingo for money
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	g.	Played the stock, options or commodities market
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	h.	Played slot machines, poker machines or other games of skill for money
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	i.	Pull tabs or "paper games" other than the lottery
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	j.	Some other form of gambling not listed above

2. What is the largest amount you have ever gambled with in any one day?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Never gambled	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than \$100, up to \$1000
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1 or less	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than \$1000, up to \$10,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	More than \$1, up to \$10	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than \$10,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	More than \$10, up to \$100		

3. Check which of the following people in your life has (or had) a gambling problem.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Father	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brother-in-Law
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mother	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spouse/Partner
<input type="checkbox"/>	Child(ren)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Relative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grandparent	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A friend or someone else important in my life		

4. When you gamble, how often do you go back another day to win back the money you lost?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some of the time (less than half the time I lost)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Most of the time I lost	<input type="checkbox"/>	Everytime I lost

5. Have you ever claimed to be winning money but werent really? In fact you lost?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, most of the time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, less than half the time I lost		

6. Do you feel you have ever had a problem with betting money or gambling?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes

7. Do you ever gamble more than you intended to?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes

8. Have people criticized your betting or told you that you have a gambling problem, regardless of whether or not you thought it was true?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes

9. Have you ever felt guilty about the way you gamble or what happens when you gamble?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes

10. Have you ever felt like you would like to stop betting money or gambling but didn't think you could?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes

11. Have you ever hidden betting slips, lottery tickets, gambling money, I.O.U.s or other signs of betting or gambling from your spouse, children, or other important people in your life?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes

12. Have you ever argued with people you live with over how you handle your money?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes

13. (If you answered yes to Question 12) Have money arguments ever centered on your gambling?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes

14. Have you ever borrowed from someone and not paid them back as a result of your gambling?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes

15. Have you ever lost time from work/school due to betting money or gambling?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes

16. If you borrowed money to gamble or to pay gambling debts, who or where did you borrow from?					
a.	From household money	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
b.	From your spouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
c.	From other relatives/in laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
d.	From banks, loan companies, or credit unions	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
e.	From credit cards	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
f.	From loan sharks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
g.	You cashed in stocks, bonds, or other securities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
h.	You sold personal or family property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
i.	You "borrowed" on your checking account (passed bad checks)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
j.	You have (had) a credit line with a bookie	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
k.	You have (had) a credit line with a casino	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Score Sheet:

Questions 1, 2 and 3 are not counted

One point for each below:

- Q 4 - Almost all the time I lose, or Every time I lose.
- Q 5 – Yes less than half the time I lose, or Yes, most of the time.
- Q6 – Yes in the past but not now, or Yes.
- Q7 – Yes
- Q8 – Yes
- Q9 – Yes
- Q10 – Yes
- Q11 – Yes
- Q12 – Not Counted
- Q13 – Yes
- Q14 – Yes
- Q15 – Yes
- Q16 a – Yes
- b – Yes
- c – Yes
- d – Yes
- e – Yes
- f – Yes
- g – Yes
- h – Yes
- i – Yes

Questions 16j and 16k not counted.

Total = _____ (20 questions are counted)

0-2 = No problem

3-4 = Problem gambler

5 or more = Probable pathological gambler

Gamblers Anonymous 20 Questions

- 1. Did you ever lose time from work or school due to gambling?
- 2. Has gambling ever made your home life unhappy?
- 3. Did gambling affect your reputation?
- 4. Have you ever felt remorse after gambling?
- 5. Did you ever gamble to get money with which to pay debts or otherwise solve financial difficulties?
- 6. Did gambling cause a decrease in your ambition or efficiency?
- 7. After losing, did you feel that you must return as soon as possible and win back your losses?
- 8. After a win, did you have a strong urge to return and win more?
- 9. Did you often gamble until your last dollar was gone?
- 10. Did you ever borrow to finance your gambling?
- 11. Have you ever sold anything to finance gambling?
- 12. Were you reluctant to use “gambling money” for normal expenditures?
- 13. Did gambling make you careless of the welfare of yourself or your family?
- 14. Did you ever gamble longer than you had planned?
- 15. Have you ever gambled to escape worry or trouble?
- 16. Have you ever committed, or considered committing, an illegal act to finance gambling?
- 17. Did gambling cause you to have difficulty in sleeping?
- 18. Do arguments, disappointments or frustrations create within you an urge to gamble?
- 19. Did you ever have an urge to celebrate any good fortune by a few hours of gambling?
- 20. Have you ever considered self-destruction or suicide as a result of your gambling?

Most Compulsive/Pathological gamblers will answer yes to at least seven of these questions.

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, and hope for tomorrow.” -Thomas Jefferson

How Do You Feel About Your Gambling Today?

(AADAC 1996)

You will be asked this question throughout the recovery process and this book. This will help you to stay in touch with your feelings. By checking in with yourself regularly, the thoughts and feelings that lead to relapse will not hit you blindly.

Check the box that most closely states how you feel today.

- Denial/Minimizing**—“It’s not that bad, what’s the big deal?”
- Bargaining**—“I’ll only go two times a week,” or “I will pay you back.”
- Hope**—Genuine hopefulness: “I hope to win this time.” Or “I hope to quit this time.”
- Sadness**—Reality sets in: “I have made some bad choices.” “I have hurt others.”
- Guilt/Shame**—“How could I have let myself do this again? I even stole money.”
- Anger**—General or specific, at others, at yourself, or at the gambling itself.
- Acceptance**—“I need help, I can’t do this myself,” or “I can’t stop myself.”
- Optimism**—“I think I can quit, I am feeling more confident everyday, I feel good.”
- Contentment**—“There are other things to do besides gambling, I can fight this.”

*You cannot control anyone or anything else in your life,
but you can choose to control your behavior.*

Chapter 3

Progression of Gambling

Robert Custer, a leader in gambling psychology, has identified three phases to the progression of gambling:

Early Stage Dependence (Winning Phase)

In this stage, the financial rewards or the internal escape received as a result of gambling behavior provide sufficient motivation for the behavior to continue.

Middle Stage (Losing Phase)

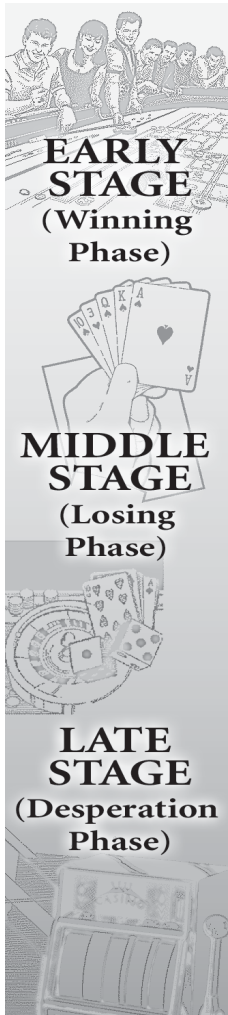
Losses begin to stack up, gamblers start “chasing” their losses, which cause the gambling behavior to become more out of control.

Late Stage (Desperation Phase)

In this final stage, the gambler becomes overwhelmed. There are extreme emotional, financial, and family/relationship problems. Criminal behavior may occur, with possible legal consequences.

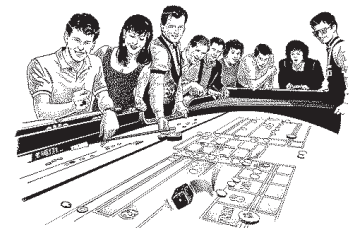
The Gambling Continuum (Back and Forth Movement)

New research has found that it is not uncommon for people to move in and out of problematic gambling periods throughout their gambling life.¹ Someone may move through Dr. Custer’s three stages of gambling, some may cycle back and forth with periods of no gambling, others never progress to the Late Stage. We now know problem gambling can be transient, coming and going, and that individuals have different courses.



Types of Gamblers

(Custer and Milt)



Non-Gambler – Does not gamble

Low-Risk Gambler:

- **Social Gambler** – Gambles for fun and entertainment, can control, and will often walk away with any winnings. They set a limit and stick to it.
- **Serious Social Gambler** – Gambles regularly with intensity while still under control, could stop, but would miss it.

¹ The natural history of problem gambling from age 18 to 29. Slutske, Wendy S.; Jackson, Kristina M.; Sher, Kenneth J. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, Vol 112(2), May 2003, 263-274. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-843X.112.2.263>

At-Risk Gambler: Answers yes to **one to three** of the DSM-5 criteria.

(Assessment in first part of this book. See page 14)

- **Relief and Escape gambler** – Gambling isn't about having fun or winning, it is used as a means to control stress or to escape pain, uncomfortable feeling, or unwanted thoughts. Someone who gambles to escape is at risk for developing a gambling problem. If a traumatic event or life-changing circumstance occurs, the escape gambler can easily fall into a destructive gambling cycle and become a Compulsive/Disordered gambler.

Problem Gambler: Answers yes to **three or four** of the DSM IV criteria.

- **Situational or Binge Gambler** - Gambling is no longer fun and entertainment, it has started to interfere with and cause problems in your life in family, job, school commitments, etc. It is still early enough in the progression of addiction that you may be able to quit with help from counseling, education, or Gamblers Anonymous. For most continuing on this path could lead to Compulsive/Disordered/ gambling, out of control, especially if some triggering, traumatic life event happens.

Disordered Gambler: Answers yes to **four or more** DSM-5 criteria.

You cannot stop gambling for long periods of time, uncontrollable gambling has and continues to cause major disruptions, problems, and losses in your life. Some of these losses can include loss of relationship, job, finances, and self-esteem to name a few. With moderate and severe levels of Gambling Disorder, there are often strong feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, thoughts of suicide, and depression.



Types of Games

Bingo	Black Jack	Craps	Dice
Keno	Lottery	Poker	Roulette
Slot Machines	Horses	Dogs	Video Poker
Chicken Fights	Off Track Betting	Sports	Commodities
Jai Alai	Stocks	Options	Dog Fights
Pull Tabs	Scratch Offs	On-Line Gambling	Texas Hold 'em
	Video Lottery Terminal		

"Our greatest battles are those with our own minds." -Jameson Frank

PART TWO: MOTIVATION FOR CHANGE



To change and to change for the better are two different things. (German proverb)

Chapter 4

Stages of Change

(Miller and Rollnick)

Where are you amidst the stages of change?

Pre-contemplation

- Are you not yet willing to change?
- Not even considering a change?
- Or are you frozen and unable to move?

Contemplation

- Do you acknowledge that there is some concern about your gambling?
- Are you considering the possibility of change?
- Are you ambivalent to change (not sure one way or the other)?
- Uncertain if you need to change or not?

Preparation

- Are you becoming committed to change?
- Planning to commit to change?
- Still considering what exactly to do?

Action

- Are you continuing to take steps to change?
- Working towards a stable lifestyle?
- Are you able to remain in recovery?

Maintenance

- Have you achieved your initial goals?
- Are you able to remain abstinent (no gambling)?
- Do you continue to work at further recovery?
- Are you still continuing a successful program of recovery?

Pre-contemplation

Contemplation

Preparation

Action

Maintenance

Where do you think you are right now in these stages?

Why do you think you are there? What is going on in your life to support this idea?

Have there been times in the past when you were in another stage? Which one?

How did you move one way or the other?

What can you do to move to the next level?

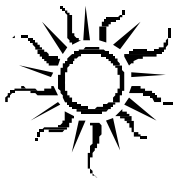
If you feel you are stuck in one stage, what is keeping you there?

What are the potential benefits if you continue to gamble? What are the potential costs?

What are the possible benefits if you stop gambling?

What are the possible costs?

- ☐ Choice – you have the choice – If someone says you have to quit gambling, your immediate reaction could be resentment. If this happens, change your thinking to: “I don’t have to, I choose to.”
- ☐ Don’t say, “I will never gamble again,” say, “I choose to not gamble for the next minute, hour, or day.”
- ☐ Moderation is worth a try, but you must be honest with yourself. Watch for denial and irrational thinking (you will learn about this in the workbook). If you continue to have negative results and consequences, it may be time to consider further help through counseling and abstinence.



All of my actions match my good intentions

Self-Help vs. Personal Support

Let’s talk about the distinction between self-help and personal support in treating your gambling addiction, or any other addiction, for that matter. Self-help is achieved through reading, or working through a workbook such as this. Personal support means many things: it may mean professional gambling addiction counseling, any group therapy, visits with a therapist, visits with the church pastor, or support groups like AA, GA, NA, SA, or others. It has been found that in order for most gamblers to successfully quit gambling, they will have tried many times on their own unsuccessfully before finally seeking help. I have

who engage in both treat-

I have seen that many of those who engage in both treatment and GA support groups have a higher success rate in their recovery.

ment and GA support groups have a higher success rate in their recovery. I think that the biggest benefits of engaging in gambling addictions treatment are not only the personal support, but also the education available about your addiction, and the tools that will help you not to gamble; also, learn about yourself and what is not working in your life.

Group work, as in support groups, has many benefits; groups help you see that you are not alone or unique, and they teach you accountability. It helps to have your peers share similar experiences, and what worked or didn’t work for them. Take quitting smoking for example: some may use the patch, hypnosis, a support group, and acupuncture all at the same time, and all these methods may increase their chances of quitting. Some say, “do whatever it takes, if you really want to quit.” I will be talking more in depth about different types of positive support later in the book.

Accountability can be both good and bad, in that, if you are not ready to change, your powers of denial will prevent you from being accountable for your addiction. Once you become accountable, you may have to admit you have a problem with gambling, and need help to quit. This is a hard place to be. It is very difficult for people, first, to acknowledge that some addiction has gotten a hold of them, and secondly, to ask for help. Accountability

allows support of any kind to help you in beating your cravings to gamble.

An example of accountability would be: by calling a support person when you are leaving work, to let them know how many minutes it will take to get home, and then be there! This helps them begin to build trust in you, and it helps you to stay focused on your recovery.

If you are ready for change, than accountability can be a BIG help for you. It may be difficult at first to ask for help, but over time, when people respond to you in a positive way, it becomes easier. An example of accountability would be: by calling a support person when you are leaving work, to let them know how many minutes it will take to get

home, and then be there! This helps them begin to build trust in you, and it helps you to stay focused on your recovery. If you do stop to gamble, what might you lose? The beginning of any trust, money, your self-esteem, from having to lie again, and it all can lead you right back into the insanity.

Abstinence

*Abstinence from gambling is my line.
Attitude promotes better future options.
Enjoy and see real life,
So you will not feel under the knife,
That every time you say no, you build
A stronger foundation.*

*Silence the dreary demons that tug at your
Steadfast will.*

*Abstinence is an everyday problem to never forget.
Remember all you have learned in treatment
And how you can use it in your life...
For abstinence is the choice.*

*And the choices one makes should lead to abstinence
Because it is through abstinence that we are
Truly free.
Free to be the real me...
Free to live life.*

–Written by an unknown gambler in recovery

“Ready for change” means that all of your actions match your good intentions.

Negative Consequences to your Gambling

(Ciarrocchi)

Place a check mark next to any item that you have personally experienced because of your gambling.

Then rate each of these from 0 to 4, showing how much it affected your family.

		Scale		
<u>0</u> – Not at all	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> – Somewhat	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u> – Very much
		Occurred? <i>(Check mark)</i>	Affected Me <i>(0-4)</i>	Affected Family <i>(0-4)</i>
Occupied too much time			_____	_____
Caused conflict at work			_____	_____
Felt out of control			_____	_____
Couldn't concentrate			_____	_____
Arguments with family members			_____	_____
Lost self-respect			_____	_____
Felt guilty			_____	_____
Spent less time at work			_____	_____
Spent less time with family			_____	_____
Lied			_____	_____
Unpaid debts			_____	_____
Late paying bills			_____	_____
Illegal acts to pay for gambling			_____	_____
Writing bad checks			_____	_____
Unable to take vacations			_____	_____
Spouse/partner criticized you			_____	_____
Violated your personal values			_____	_____
Unable to reach financial goals			_____	_____
Unable to reach family goals			_____	_____
Unable to maintain your spiritual goals			_____	_____
Kept secrets from others			_____	_____
Became angry/violent			_____	_____
Thought about suicide			_____	_____
Tried to commit suicide			_____	_____
Lost a job			_____	_____
Had to file bankruptcy			_____	_____
Pawned personal possessions			_____	_____
Had things repossessed			_____	_____
Lost home			_____	_____
Lost an important relationship			_____	_____

Action is the enemy of thought.
-Unknown

Chapter 5

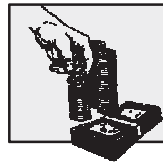


Beginning Tools to Help you Succeed

It is **very important** in the beginning of recovery for you to remove as many temptations to gamble as possible. Here are a few tips for you to consider in helping progress further in your successful recovery.

- **Remove as much access to money as you can:**

This can be difficult for two reasons: one is that you may not have such options open to you, and the other could be that you just don't want to let go of control yet. I have been told many times that it is our right as "adults" to keep responsibility for our money ourselves. It feels as if we are children when someone else is in charge of our money. My question to you is, "honestly, are you dealing with your money as a responsible adult, or not?" This is a decision that only you can make. Believe me, this is definitely a "deal breaker" for most gamblers trying to remain abstinent. It is almost impossible to fight an urge if you have money in your pocket. Any sort of block that you can throw to make it more difficult to be impulsive will help, or at least slow you down until the craving or "urge" is over. Believe me when I say that money is what feeds the gambler.



Honestly, are you dealing with your money as a responsible adult, or not?"

- **Don't carry cash:**

If you must, only carry as much as you will need for the day. How much is enough for lunch? A bottle of water? Pop? Coffee?

- **Dispose of ATM cards:**

If this is how you get cash out of the bank to gamble, by all means, get rid of it. If you honestly need it, what can you do to prevent using it to gamble? Some banks will lower the amount of cash you can withdraw in a day....hmmm, something to consider?

- **Discontinue any use of your credit cards:**

If you feel you need a credit card for emergencies, one is enough. Some gamblers have frozen theirs in a glass of water so that if they were in the middle of a gambling urge, it would take time to thaw out, and maybe the urge would have subsided by then.

- **Direct deposit your paychecks:**

In this day and age, most places of employment will do this for you, unless you have reached the point that you don't or can't have a checking account. You can speak with your bank personnel, and see if they will arrange for a double signature for you. This means that it takes two signatures in order for you to withdraw money.

- **Have someone you trust work with you in managing your money:**

Accountability is a BIG help with this. Require yourself to show receipts to someone for everything you have purchased, including groceries, gas, bills, rent, etc., or have someone go with you to do your shopping.

- **Stay away from any Quick Loan or Check to Cash businesses:**

They are as bad as loan sharks, with an over-inflated, very high rate of interest. Some charge up to 25% interest, and still others may charge up to 500% interest.

- **Think about making large amounts of accessible money inaccessible:**

You can do this by investing in CD's, IRA's, savings bonds, or mutual funds.

- **Keep a journal of your expenditures:**

Later in this book, I will give you a worksheet for this. Keeping track of not only bills and everything you are spending money on is important, but if you continue to gamble, how much do you spend, lose, and win? If you are not gambling, how much are you saving?

**Tell friends and family members not to lend you money
NO MATTER WHAT!**

• **Try to determine your “true” financial need:**

- What constitutes your need for “more” money?
- Are you trying to live up to someone else’s expectations?
- Do you really need lots of money (the easy way) to be happy?
- Are you spending more than you are making?
- Are you “robbing Peter to pay Paul?”

• **Stop the “head talk” as soon as possible.**

- Distract your thoughts and self-talk by doing something physical, or calling someone.

• **Build a support network of non-gambling friends and family:**

- Develop support groups through gambling addiction treatment.
- Attend a 12-Step support group – GA, AA, NA, etc.
- Find a GA sponsor to assist you.
- Build or rebuild relationships with family, friends, co-workers, or your church.

• **Get involved with others – Don’t isolate yourself:**

- Join a health club.
- Volunteer.
- Help others.
- Get back to church if you were previously involved.
- Join in with family and friends, and get more involved with your children.

• **Find financial help if you need to get control of bills and creditors through consumer credit or state agencies.**

• **Call your state gambling help line to find treatment/education agency that deals with problem gambling.** (*National number located on page 14; this will refer you to your state helpline.*)

• **Prevent boredom: Stay Busy!:**

- Plan your days and nights, and keep them as full as possible during the beginning of recovery. I will be sharing ways of doing this later in the book, with healthy leisure activities.

- **Figure out how much money you have been gambling with, and save it in a safe spot:**

- Choose a safe place that you cannot get access to easily, maybe in an account that you cannot draw on by yourself, one from which you need a co-signer to withdraw.
- Make a list of all the things that need to be fixed, purchased, or taken care of, that you have avoided because of your gambling.

- **Change takes time to measure:**

- Be patient—you didn't get here in one day; it will take more than one day to change. Think "One day at a time."
- Gambling may have had many negative consequences in your life, and it will take time to straighten them out.
- It takes a few times of doing something to make it a habit.

Practice, practice, practice!

- Relapse happens!—It's not the end of the world. Let it be just a "slip," and get right back into your recovery. Don't accept it.

Throughout your recovery, you may feel frustrated with negative "fallout" as a result of your gambling. These negative consequences may appear days, weeks, months, or years after you have stopped gambling. Don't let these get you down to the point of relapsing with gambling, or any other addictive behavior, including substance abuse. Deal with these consequences as they come

Relapse happens!—
It's not the end of
the world. Let it be just
a "slip," and get right
back into your recovery.
Don't accept it.

Chapter 6

Concept of Randomness

(D. Hodgins)

Many gamblers believe that they can influence games that have random outcomes. Games which are designed to give players this idea are slots, VLT's (Video Lottery Terminal), lottery tickets, and bingo, all games that have no skill component, but are designed so that it appears your choices or strategies make a difference. In reality, the player cannot influence the outcome. You cannot become a VLT expert in the way you might be an expert at a game of skill (e.g., a chess champion, golf master).



"If I get my favorite machine, I can win."

"I know how this game works—I am good at it."

Many of the thoughts that lead to gambling are related to incorrect underlying beliefs. A very common underlying belief of gamblers is that *Gambling is a way to solve financial problems*. This belief is often related to having experienced a big win early in their gambling career. Because it has happened before, they overestimate the likelihood that a big win will occur again. We also regularly hear about winners—whether it's the player three machines down the row of slots, or the multimillion-dollar winner of the lottery.

Winning is noisy, but losing tends to be silent; we rarely hear about it.

A second misconception about gambling concerns the concept of randomness. A common belief is that if you play long enough, you will win. You know that the outcome you are waiting for will happen if you hold on long enough. *"Just one more wager..."* but in truth, separate plays or wagers in many games have absolutely no relationship to one another.

A common belief is that if you play long enough, you will win. You know that the outcome you are waiting for will happen if you hold on long enough. *"Just one more wager..."* but in truth, separate plays or wagers in many games have absolutely no relationship to one another.

For example, if you flip a coin once, your chance of getting heads is 50%, and your chance of getting tails is 50%—there are two possible outcomes, and they are equally likely. The second time you flip a coin, the chances are the same, 50-50. The result of each individual toss has no relationship to any other toss. The coin does not have a memory. A run of heads does not mean a tails is more likely on the next toss.

VLT and slot players often continue playing even if they are consistently losing, because they feel it is “their turn to win.” Or, they feel that a specific machine is “due to pay out.” The fact is that each spin is a separate event, and is not affected by what has happened before. A machine that has just paid out is just as likely to pay out as one that has not!



Similarly, in roulette, each number has a 1 in 38 chance of winning on a particular spin. If you watch the play for a period of time, and notice that a particular number—say 23—has not come up for a long time, it may seem logical to think that it will come up soon. But each spin of the wheel is a separate event. Number 23 has 1 in 38 chances of coming up on every single spin—Neither the roulette wheel nor the ball has a memory.

Finally, many gamblers do not have accurate information about the odds of various types of gambling. They may realize that the house has the advantage, but they like to believe that they will profit from other, less lucky players. However, because of the house advantage, there is a *negative rate of return* when you gamble. The games are designed so that in the long run, you will lose money. The more you play, the more you lose. For example, the typical pay-out from a VLT machine is about 92%, which means that the machine retains 8%. In other words, for every \$1 you play on a machine, you will, on average, get back 92 cents. The speed of play for Slots and VLTs are measured in bets per minute. 12 bets per minute is equal to 720 bets per hour or one bet every 5 seconds. If you bet \$1 per play, on average, you will lose \$57.60 an hour. The more you play, the more likely it is that you will achieve this average, and there is nothing that you can do to change this. Lottery games are Games of chance, i.e., they have a negative rate of return; the odds of winning Power Ball is 80 million to 1 per ticket bought, and the Lotto’s odds are to match 1 in 3 million.

Here are some other odds that are NOT IN YOUR FAVOR:

Games	House Advantage	Pays to Players
VLTS, Slots, Video Poker	5-15%	85-95%
Horse Racing	19%	81%
Sports Select	37%	63%
Lottery	55%	45%
Bingo	35%	65%
Casino Games (combined)	21%	79%

The Gamblers Fallacy

The Gamblers Fallacy is another piece to the concept of randomness and how we look at winning from a child's mind. It begins with the mistaken idea that odds for something with a fixed probability increase or decrease upon recent occurrences.

Gamblers get stuck in these mistaken thoughts which then cause the behavior of continued gambling even when losing and they can't get out of it.

Here are two ways we were taught as children to figure something out:

1. Cause and Effect:

§ We learn in grade school if we hit a nail on the head it goes in and I caused it to happen.

2. Patterning:

§ We learn patterning is very important in 3rd or 4th grade.

§ Recognize the pattern – 2 – 4 – 6 _____.

§ Or the pattern of red...black...red...black....

What's next?



World of Chance and Random Events

§ In the world of gambling you cannot predict the outcome by cause and effect or patterning when you apply random events to the gamble.

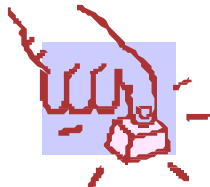
§ On a casino roulette wheel there is a board that tells you what every hit was for the last 30 hits be it Red/Black or Numbers

§ Gamblers think; "It has been red for 7X in a row, it must be black next time."

We are trying to use ways of considering outcomes with how we learned as children and it doesn't compute in random events such as gambling. Think about it.

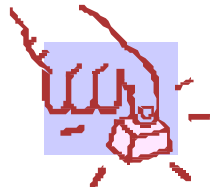
You may be thinking that these sound like pretty good odds, but let's break it down with video poker. Say, for example, that you put \$20 in the machine, and you know from the Oregon Lottery website that your favorite game has a 92% payback. That may sound pretty good, like you win 92% of the time but that is not what that means. In reality, a 92% payback means that over time, on average, you lose \$0.08 for every dollar played. If you are wagering \$1.00 per play, that \$20 you put in the machine should only last you about 21 minutes. This can add up to great losses. Let's break it down further. Think about how the machine's play button is typically pushed every 5 seconds— if you are betting \$1.00 per play this will over time average a loss of \$0.08 every 5 seconds. The below shows how much you can expect to lose when betting \$1.00 per play on a typical Oregon Lottery video game. Depending on how much you bet, the calculation will go up or down proportionally.

5 seconds



\$0.08

1 minute



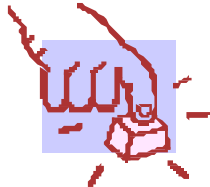
\$0.96

5 minutes



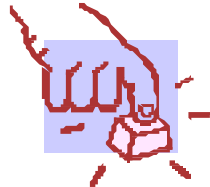
\$4.80

1 hour



\$57.60

8 hours



\$460.80

8 hours 3 days a week



\$1,382.40

What are some of the misconceptions or mistaken beliefs you have about “beating the odds?”

1. _____

2. _____

It has been found that those who actually “touch” the gambling will bet more than the observers. These are the ones throwing the dice, for example, in craps, not those just placing the money down on the table. Why is this? The players who actually touch the gambling take ownership of the gamble, and believe that they can control the outcome. This is also where the “Big Shot” mentality comes into play, in hopes of getting “the big roll for everyone.” This makes him the star of the table.

When you further consider gambling and randomness, you can compare it to “getting high” with drugs and alcohol. You know that every time you ingest these two substances, you will feel a noticeable effect. Three things can happen when you ingest them:

1. Learn to manage when you do ingest it, to not overdose.
2. Get bored and “walk away.”
3. Keep doing it until you die.

If you think about gambling, no one wins every time they bet—it may be the second time or the fifth time—This is called *intermittent reward*.

When winning happens randomly, and you can’t predict when it is going to happen (“*maybe this time*”), the gambling drive becomes even stronger, and it be-

When winning happens randomly, and you can’t predict when it is going to happen (“*maybe this time*”), the gambling drive becomes even stronger, and it becomes more difficult to quit and walk away.

comes more difficult to quit and walk away. Gambling itself won’t kill you (although someone else may), and you can’t overdose on gambling (although you *can* spend all your money)!

No-Dice

Spin the wheel
that feels nice.
Roll the dice once or twice,
make it seven or eleven.
Spare me the real world
and take me to heaven.
Oops!
Holy craps...here I go again.
Dealer quick! The ATM
and pray, my balance and my pin
will quickly bring
me back again
to that place devoid of sorrow
that I need not worry
from who I will borrow
tomorrow.
(DHB)

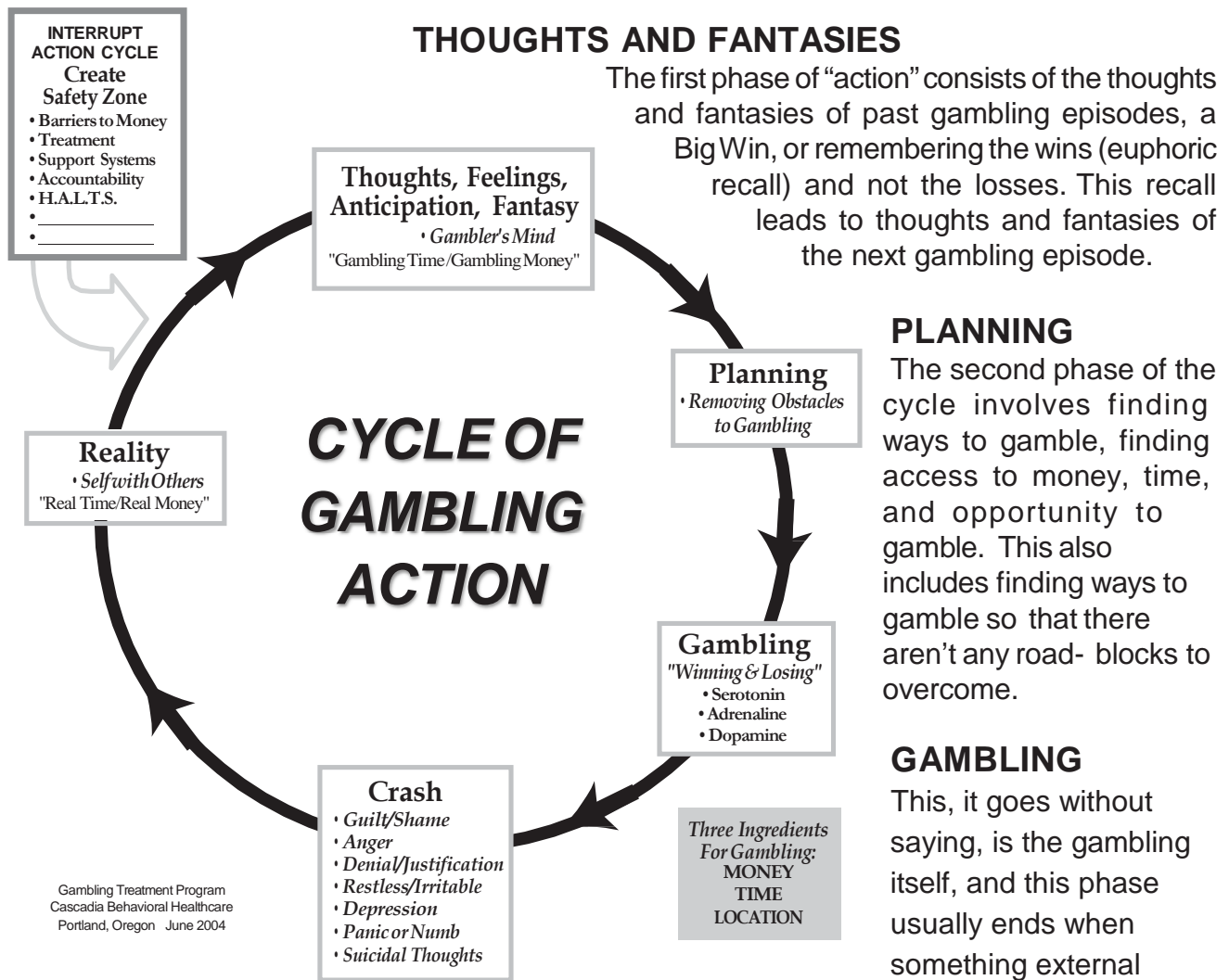


Chapter 7

Cycle of the Gambling Action

To achieve effective recovery, it is crucial to understand the psychology addressing gambling “action,” and to gain the skills to get out of the cycle and into recovery. By the time you are done with this book, you will have explored yourself, and learned many tools to help with this process. Below I explain how the cycle works, and each of its phases.

As you read this, can you see how your gambling experience has been like this cycle?



money or time, one’s getting caught, or having to deal with other obligations.

CRASH

This is the phase when reality sets in because of loss of money—bills, rent, food, debt to family and friends, etc. (D. Hodgins)

During the crash phase, there are feelings of shame, remorse, guilt, anger, hopelessness, and helplessness to the addiction itself. This is when depression and withdrawal symptoms from not gambling may begin, which can foster thoughts of suicide. If you are ever feeling this way, you must stop everything and ask for help.

As the addiction progresses, this “crash” phase will often become more intense because of more losses. Because gamblers are so visual, I think that this graphic will help you to understand and recognize when to get out of the cycle.

The best solution, of course, is to stop it before allowing yourself to get too deep into the *thoughts and fantasies* phase.

THOUGHTS & FANTASIES EXERCISE

This next exercise is very important for you to experience; it will help you stay in touch with your feelings when you are going into action. Many gamblers couldn’t even tell you when they are in “Action,” or what it feels like. Take a minute to relax first, and then concentrate on what it feels like when you are in “Action,” when you are in the thoughts and fantasies and planning stage.

What are you feeling physically? Ex: “Butterflies in the stomach,” sweating, shaking, salivating.

What are you feeling emotionally? Ex: Hard to concentrate, excitement, anxious, irritable.

What is your self-talk? Ex: “I will leave for my lunch a little early, go to the ATM and get to the casino.” “I hope I get the same machine as last time, I won \$250.”

Now, sit and concentrate, and visualize the center of your body, and really feel what this feeling of the Action is like for you. If you can grasp this feeling, then you will be able to identify yourself going into Action much sooner, which will allow you to put a blocker, tool, or coping skill in place to stop the cycle sooner.

EXAMINE YOUR GAMBLING

(Cascadia Behavioral Health)

When one is in the cycle of gambling, denial is a major part of the addiction that allows us to continue even when we know it is out of control. Use this worksheet as a way to examine and explore what your behaviors, feelings, and thoughts are regarding your gambling.

It is important to be honest, or you will not learn what your cycle is like. How often have you lied to others about your winnings, but not the losses?

Explore the last 5 times you gambled:

Example:			
Situation/ Behavior	Feelings before gambling	Thoughts before and while gambling	Money lost or won
<i>Coming home from work I drove past my favorite Lucky spot.</i>	<i>Tired, lonely, feeling broke.</i>	<i>Who cares? Nobody will know if I stop and if I win it will pay my bills.</i>	<i>Lost \$120.</i>

The best way to escape from a problem is to solve it. (Alan Saporta)

Chapter 8



Function “Payoff” of Gambling

When I ask you what is the function or “payoff” of gambling for you, what does that mean? Most gamblers say that they started gambling as a way to get out and be social, while some say it is to make money in an “easy” way; still others say it is to “escape” from life and its stressors.

Do you believe that you might become a millionaire? For those of you who have come to accept that you are a problem/pathological gambler, what need did gambling fulfill for you in the beginning? Does this reason still hold true for you today? Why or why not? How has your gambling changed?

When trying to stop the insanity of an addiction, you need to understand what it is that you like about it. What does it fulfill for you that nothing else can fulfill? One of the biggest reasons is to “escape” from something. Once you figure this out, you can then find ways to get these areas of your life back in order, and fill that hole with something else.

What is it you are trying to escape from?

Responsibilities?

Physical or emotional pain?

A bad relationship?

A stressful job?

Loneliness?

Your reality?

What was the function “payoff” of gambling for you in the beginning?

Does the gambling still have this effect for you? Why or why not? What do you think happened to change this for you?

If you thought gambling was “fixing” something in your life, what was it? Did it succeed? Does it still?

There are eight major life areas affected by addiction:

Areas:

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. Family | 2. Social | 3. Legal | 4. Physical |
| 5. Financial | 6. Spiritual | 7. Emotional | 8. Occupational |

In order for any goal to be successful, it has to be reasonably attainable and measurable.

Let’s work through the specific areas in your life that you need to change: We can set up goals for each, but let’s take it one **small** step at a time. Quite often, we may set goals for ourselves, and set

them too high to accomplish. This could be because we didn’t break the goals down into smaller steps, or we want a “quick fix,” or we are “self-sabotaging”. (These are all characteristics of immediate gratification needs in relation to addiction).

In order for any goal to be successful, it has to be reasonably attainable and measurable. Once you have found some confidence in succeeding with these small steps towards a goal, it will become easier for you to have the confidence to continue changing. How do you know when you have accomplished the goal?

Area of life: (Example): **Financial Problems**

Describe the problem: *“I have creditors calling about my credit card debts, wanting money, and I can’t pay them all. I am afraid to call them.”*

Goal: *To start a payment plan to pay off the debts over time.*

First “small” step to change: *I will sit down on a Sunday and go through all the bills I have been throwing in the corner, afraid to look at. I will take just the latest bill for each account, and throw the rest away.*

(If you think this will be too emotionally overwhelming for you, ask someone you trust to help you through this step. We don’t want the stress of it to send you into a relapse.)

Second “small” step to change: *I will use the financial worksheet in this book to organize all my bills, and all incoming and outgoing financial information, and call one creditor to set up a payment plan. Will \$20 monthly work?*

(Continue this one bill at a time, and stick with it!—Pay one off, then another off. You *can* make bigger payments)

Area of life: Family

Describe the problem:

Goal:

First “small” step to change:

Second “small” step to change:

Area of life: Social

Describe the problem:

Goal:

First “small” step to change:

Second “small” step to change:

Area of life: Legal

Describe the problem:

Goal:

First “small” step to change:

Second “small” step to change:

Area of life: Physical

Describe the problem:

Goal:

First “small” step to change:

Second “small” step to change:

Area of life: Financial

Describe the problem:

Goal:

First “small” step to change:

Second “small” step to change:

Area of life: Spiritual

Describe the problem:

Goal:

First “small” step to change:

Second “small” step to change:

Area of life: Emotional

Describe the problem:

Goal:

First “small” step to change:

Second “small” step to change:

Area of life: Occupational

Describe the problem:

Goal:

First “small” step to change:

Second “small” step to change:

Identifying Beliefs/Reasons for Gambling

(Ciarrocchi)

This is a great beginning worksheet for you to see, in black and white, what function gambling serves you in your life.

<u>Reasons for gambling</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Always</u>
Escape	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loneliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Boredom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Depression	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pleasure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Habit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"I deserve it"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To "numb out"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excitement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problems at Home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worry about Debt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Celebration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Isolate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To be Social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trying to recoup my losses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My system can beat the odds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I deserve to win	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A big win will solve everything	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Worksheet “Two Ways for Everything”

List at least two ways your gambling has affected your life in these areas, in a negative way:

Family: *Example: Missed family outings*

Spouse/Partner: *Example: Told lies*

Friends: *Example: Borrowed money without paying it back*

Finances: *Example: Secret credit cards*

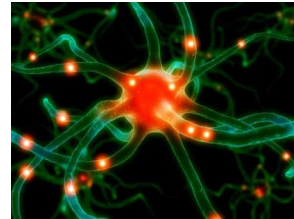
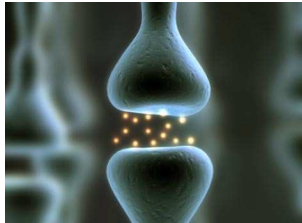
Self-Esteem: *Example: “I am nothing without money”*

Employment: *Example: Continually late back from lunch*

Health: *Example: Can’t sleep, thinking of the money I lost*

Chapter 9

Withdrawals and Post Acute Withdrawal Symptoms (PAWS)



It is important to understand that when you stop using substances, gambling, or anything that is affecting your brain, you may experience withdrawals, depression, and cravings. Here is a quick and somewhat simple lesson to help you understand how addiction actually changes your brain chemistry.

Recent brain studies show that when you ingest a chemical like drugs or alcohol, you stimulate the reward/pleasure center of your brain. This is what makes you feel good. There is something called neurotransmitters in the brain and body that fire substances when needed. You have heard of dopamine, serotonin, adrenaline, and endorphins I am sure. All of these substances, when produced by the brain, make you feel good. For those of you who are currently taking anti-depressants, these are usually a prescription that affects the brain neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin. Another example would be when you are working out or doing any kind of cardio work where your heart gets pumping. After a few minutes you will feel more relaxed and no pain. These are the neurotransmitters of endorphins going to work for you.

These recent studies have shown that when gambling, when you are in action, it is stimulating the reward/pleasure center in the brain and firing off dopamine, serotonin, and adrenaline. So even though you are not ingesting anything into your body you are still changing the way your brain is working.

Now with that information you can better understand when I say before someone starts drinking, using, or gambling, their brain fires these neurotransmitters off by itself and we feel good. After someone has been using something like alcohol, drugs, gambling etc., those behaviors cause the brain to fire the “feel good” neurotransmitters. Then when the brain doesn’t have to fire these anymore the brain forgets how to. What happens then is when someone tries to stop those behaviors, the brain wants the reward/pleasure center to fire, but doesn’t know how to anymore. The result can be craving caused by the brain wanting the stimulant, depression because the center isn’t firing, or withdrawals.



There are two steps in the withdrawal process:

- Acute Withdrawal that happens in the first few days after stopping the behavior. This happens often with drug and alcohol withdrawal and somewhat with gambling.
- Post acute withdrawal (PAW) which happens over time. These are withdrawal symptoms that can last up to 18 months and sometimes longer.

Detox or acute withdrawal usually lasts for about 3-10 days (can be up to 28 days if other drugs are involved). This phase is followed by PAWs which usually declines in severity as time goes by. There are certain times when the brain is healing and learning to reboot itself or repair itself when it can be particularly more difficult and cause craving and depressive symptoms. These symptoms can increase at 90 days, 6 months, or 12 months so at these times be more aware of how you are feeling, what you are thinking, and how you are behaving to help prevent a relapse.

This tells us that you can't expect to be healed from anything after only 30 days or so. It takes more time than that.

The first 60-120 days are crucial because not only are you going through physical changes/withdrawals but making changes in your life to find your path of recovery. Relapse can happen in the first 6 months because of these major changes and if you don't understand how vulnerable you are to these PAW symptoms you will not recognize your path to relapse. Relapse does not need to happen if you recognize and learn to manage your PAWS relapse symptoms.

Examples of post acute withdrawal (PAW) symptoms:

Difficulty in thinking clearly:

- Concentration is impaired, as is abstract reasoning and the ability to see cause and effect.
- You may find it hard to set priorities.
- Rapid and repetitive thinking may set in. The mind races or plans the same thing over and over.

Difficulty in managing feelings and emotions:

- Over reaction can lead to more stress on the system and can produce emotional numbness.
- One can get overly angry or overly anxious in proportion to the situation or event.
- One can take things too personally or sometimes experience rage for no reason.

Difficulty in remembering things:

- Short term memory problems are common at first. You may need to write everything down.
- Long term memory problems can occur in times of stress.

Sleep disturbances:

- You may dream a lot and have unusual dreams, sometimes gambling dreams and waking up anxious like you were really awake during the dream.
- You can have difficulty sleeping, may sleep more than you should, or wake up in the night.

Check the PAWS that you currently are experiencing or have experienced and identify steps that will help you manage these symptoms.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleep problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling anxious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability | <input type="checkbox"/> Depression |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weight gain/loss | <input type="checkbox"/> Low energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty in thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> Can't focus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mood swings | <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loss stress tolerance | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor concentration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impaired memory | <input type="checkbox"/> Impatience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cravings | <input type="checkbox"/> Using/drinking/gambling dreams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impulsivity | <input type="checkbox"/> Low pain tolerance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gastrointestinal problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Low frustration tolerance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Body aches | <input type="checkbox"/> Shakiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fidgety | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of enjoyment |

Now, name three of these symptoms and ways to cope with them:

1. PAW Symptom: _____

Way to cope: _____

2. PAW Symptom: _____

Way to cope: _____

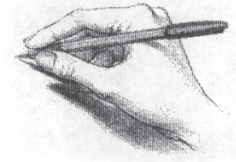
3. PAW Symptom: _____

Way to cope: _____

“The first thing I do every morning, and the last before I go to sleep at night, is to clear my thoughts and simply live in the moment.”

Chapter 10

Journaling



I know that for most people, the very suggestion of journaling can cause them to freeze up. Unfortunately, I don't know how to make the idea of journaling any more palatable for you. I will tell you that this could be one of the best tools for you to use in your recovery. Here is why: when you are in the midst of addictive activity, you are so full of denial, and so out of touch with your thoughts and feelings, both physically and emotionally, that you can't even imagine any "way out."

By simply writing down how you are thinking, feeling, and behaving daily, you can start to see patterns that are both good and

By simply writing down how you are thinking, feeling, and behaving daily, you can start to see patterns that are both good and bad for you. Over time, by looking back at past entries, you can see how far you have come, and how you have changed.

bad for you. Over time, by looking back at past entries, you can see how far you have come, and how you have changed.

Trust the process; just try it for a few months, and see if it works for you—nothing can change if you don't try something new. Throughout this book, I will provide space for you to journal. If you are comfortable with journaling already, please get a notebook and start right away. If not, by the end of the book you will have become more comfortable with it, and may use it as a self-help tool for life.

Journaling can be as easy as writing one word or thought, or writing a sentence or paragraph. You can jot something down first thing in the morning to initiate positive thoughts for your day, or to organize your day. Or, you can write at the end of your day to explore what happened during the day.

Here are some ideas to write about:

Thoughts—positive and negative
Behavior—to self or others
Reactions to situations
Cravings
Coping skills used
Loss of control
Positive affirmations
Family plans

Feelings—positive or negative
Reactions to others
Triggers, urges
Warning signs
Anger
Healthy alternatives to gambling
Goals—short and long term
Positive financial step taken.



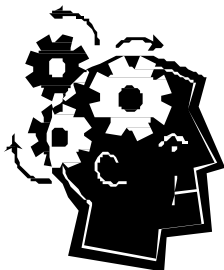
Take a moment and write about your day today:

*Change your thinking to dealing with life today instead of running from it.
This will make tomorrow easier to deal with.*

Chapter 11

Thinking Errors/ Irrational Thinking

(Samenow and Yochelson)



Thinking errors, or irrational thinking patterns, are ways that addictive people can continue to behave irresponsibly without a conscience. These errors allow addicts to rationalize and justify what it is they want, even if it hurts them or someone else. These thoughts are learned throughout our lives, and become habits that are difficult to break. Fear not, for it is possible if you want to change your dysfunctional thinking patterns. Old habits can be broken, and new habits formed, with time and practice. Once you have given these patterns names, it is harder to let them control you and the unhealthy decisions that you make.

Here are just a few, so when reading them, think about which ones you use, and on whom. Are you harming yourself or someone else by using them?

• ANGER:

Some people use anger to gain power over other people or situations even if they are not angry, as in—*“I am sick and tired of your riding me about my gambling, you better shut up right now!”*

(Power Plays are used when you are not getting your way, and this may show up as intimidation, or walking out on the other person.)

• BLAMING:

This is when you change the focus of the discussion towards someone else in a negative way—*“I wouldn’t continue to gamble if my life weren’t so stressful, and that includes you!”*

• LACK OF EMPATHY:

You think only of yourself, and not how your actions will affect others—*“Why should he/she be mad? I am the one who has to deal with getting this money back, not them.”*

• I CAN’T:

If you say you “can’t,” you are really saying; “I won’t” so that you don’t have to be held responsible—*“I can’t remember how much I lost gambling!”*

• LYING:

We all know what this is, but there are three types of lying:

- Omission: Telling only part of the truth,—10% truth/90% lie. *“I stopped at the casino on my way home for someone else, but not to gamble.”*
- Commission: A total lie; saying untruths—*“I did not gamble today.”*
- Assent: Agreeing with someone just to get them “off your back”—*“You’re right, I do need to stop gambling.”*

• ENTITLEMENT:

This is when you tell yourself you are entitled to something, no matter what—*“I deserve to stop at the bar for a few minutes to gamble, because I need to relax after my stressful day.”*

• MINIMIZING:

This is used to get the other person to think that the situation isn’t as bad as it really is—*“I only gambled one time all week, and besides, I only spent \$50.”*

• DRAMA/EXCITEMENT:

This works well for a gambler who hates to be bored. You need the excitement of the gamble so that you will cause a fight, in order to have an excuse to leave and gamble—*“I don’t know what you expect me to do around here, and I am sick to death of staying home with you and doing nothing but fighting.”*

• SHUT DOWN:

This allows you to quit caring and give up so that you can continue to gamble. *“Who cares? He or she is not going to believe that I didn’t gamble, so I might as well do it anyway.”*

• VAGUENESS:

Creating confusion, and being unclear to the point that the other person gives up, so that you don’t have to take responsibility for your actions—*“What are all these \$150 cash withdrawals on our credit cards?” “They are just things I needed, food, tools, and stuff.”*

• THINKING YOU ARE SPECIAL: (feeling “unique”)

You think that you are “the exception,” and that rules don’t apply to you—*“He/She can’t tell me to never gamble again, I know what I am doing, I don’t have a problem like those others, I can quit whenever I want to.”*

• **RATIONALIZATION:**

This thought process attempts to provide some other reason for the behavior than its being caused by the gambling. This is not total denial, but rather, an inaccurate explanation of the behavior's cause is given—"I just stopped after work with the guys for some beers."

• **JUSTIFICATION:**

When you come up with some reason to make it all right to gamble, even when you know that it is not—"It was a VERY stressful day at work, so I needed to relax and unwind before I came home."

Pick five thinking errors that you have used to enable your gambling.

Example:

Lying by assent:

"I know I promised not to lie about gambling anymore, and I promise I will tell you 'straight up' when I do; it won't ever happen again!"

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Here are some irrational thoughts most used by gamblers in their addiction. Do any of these sound familiar to you?

I can control my gambling.

If I borrow this money, I will pay it back before anybody notices that it is gone.

I can win it back—"I'm due!"

Gambling will fix all my problems.

I am a lucky person; I am just going through a dry spell.

I just need to get away from my nagging spouse or partner for a little bit.

It helps me relax.

I can't afford to take the time from work and home to seek out treatment and self-education.

I'll just take bankruptcy out and everything will be fixed, I won't need to gamble anymore.

I can quit whenever I want.

My committing suicide would be a good answer for my family; and the insurance money would take care of my gambling debt.

What are some of yours?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

With irrational thinking, you simply look at things in such a way that they confirm what you already believe. If you want to see fault in someone else, you will, whether or not it is truly there. When you hurt someone, you may say “*It’s not my fault, they can take it however they want to.*”

In addiction, it seems as if we have two personalities—one good and one bad. There is a voice in our head which I will call “the addict,” ... We need to acknowledge this other ‘entity’ so that we know who it is we are fighting this battle with.

It takes time and practice to change these thought patterns from irrational to rational. Here are a couple of exercises to practice with until they become a new habit:

I believe that, in addiction, it seems as if we have two personalities—one good and one bad. There is a voice in our head which I will call “the addict,” but you can name it anything you want, maybe “Joe, Adeline, or the devil,” anything you want. We need to acknowledge this other entity (so

to speak) so that we know who it is we are fighting this battle with. I am sure that many of you have been involved in an argument or two with this voice, and have quite often lost!

Some people say, “Don’t even get involved in the argument!” I say, “If you do, try the ‘**STOP**’ process. It works!”

Using the “**STOP**” process:

Take a minute to close your eyes and imagine yourself going into “Action” to gamble. Visualize where you are, what is going on around you, you are starting to feel the physical excitement, and the voice comes into your head.

What is the voice saying to you? “No one will know,” “I will only spend a few dollars.” This is the addiction trying to talk you into it, so at this point, yell, “**STOP!**” either out loud or in your head. You can do it at any point during the thought span. Put some kind of visual in your mind when you yell “**STOP!**” either a stop sign or something red, or perhaps:

“STOP!”



“NO!”

Another type of thinking error occurs when our self-talk is negative, not positive. We have had some of these errors since childhood; maybe it was someone else in our lives that started these thinking errors. Maybe a parent or teacher told us that we weren’t good enough or smart enough, or maybe it was someone telling us that we were worthless and should have never been born. As we grow into adults, we carry these with us as our truth, and come up with some negative self-talk all on our own.

Here is another exercise to help with this process:

1. Listen to the way you talk to yourself.
 - a. Tone of voice
 - b. Words said, either positive or negative
2. Do you put yourself down? Do you make yourself feel unworthy?
3. Interrupt these thoughts by again saying “STOP!”
4. Check in with yourself to see where they came from, whether from you or someone else in your life.
5. Is it really true? Take a minute to reframe the thought.

Example: *“I can’t do anything right, so I just won’t try.”*

Turn it into something positive:

“I have done something right by having my son.”

6. What was the situation that caused you to talk to yourself that way?
7. Watch out for these words:
 - Always
 - Should
 - Never
 - Everybody
 - Ought to
 - I deserve this

Think of something that you say to yourself often, and let’s walk through the steps:

- a. What did you say to yourself? And how did you say it?

b. What happened to make you talk this way?

c. Is it true? How can you change the negative thought into a positive one?
Reframe it.

Try writing down all the negative things you say to yourself, and how many times a day you say them. Do this for a few days and see the results. Do you really deserve it?



EVERYDAY TELL YOURSELF SOMETHING POSITIVE YOU DID.

COMPLIMENT YOURSELF!

Chapter 12

Denial and Defense Mechanisms

(emergence)

*Denial is not letting yourself know what reality is.
What we deny is a problem, a feeling, or a loss.*

What a wonderful world “Denial” can make for us! It can be our protector, it keeps us safe from things we are not ready to deal with, but unfortunately, it can get in our way for leading a healthy, honest lifestyle. Denial works under our normal level of awareness, can be considered “self-deception” and it is as progressive as our addiction is.

In addiction, denial can build an elaborate system of lies and defense mechanisms, so that the addict truly believes in what he or she is saying or doing. In fact, as the addiction progresses, the addict doesn’t even know that he or she is in denial. You will learn how denial is one of the first “red flags” in relapse later on in the book.

The reason compulsive gamblers (or any other type of addicts) use denial is simply to set up a protective barrier to keep from admitting and accepting that they have a problem. Addicts in denial will begin structuring their lives in such a way that supports their denial within their career, friendships, and social circles.

1. Types of Denial:

• **Simple Denial:**

Maintaining that something is not so, insisting that one’s gambling is not a problem, despite evidence that there is a problem. The gambler’s lying and dishonesty are forms of denial, and often the gambler is consciously unaware of this truth.

• **Blaming:**

Denying responsibility for irresponsible behaviors, and maintaining that the responsibility lies with someone or something other than oneself.

• **Minimizing:**

Admitting to a small part of one’s problem in order to satisfy oneself or others, so as to make the problem seem much smaller than it really is.

• **Rationalizing:**

Gives excuses, “alibis,” and justifications for one’s gambling behavior. The motive here is to provide some other reason for the behavior than its being caused by the gambling. This is not total denial, but one is giving an inaccurate explanation of the cause of one’s behavior.

• **Anger/Hostility:**

Gambling addicts may become angry or irritable at others when the habits of gambling are brought up.—This may work well to get people to back off, unfortunately, because when you act out in an aggressive way, people will tend to stop the conversation and avoid the subject.

• **Diversion:**

Changing the subject to avoid a topic that is threatening.

• **Intellectualizing:**

Avoiding emotionally searching out the gambling problem by theorizing or generalizing.

• **Humor:**

This is a way to avoid any painful feelings associated with the seriousness of the gambling problem.

2. What denial feels like:

Desperate, afraid, guilty, anxious, and out of control.

Shutting down all emotions—feeling flat or repressed.

Inappropriate reactions to situations.

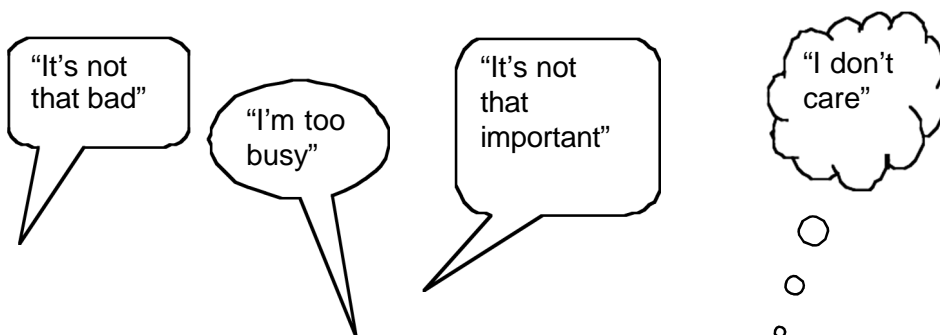
Tired? Keeping the reality of our actions from showing themselves is like trying to hold a ball under water. It takes a lot of concentration and energy.

Defensiveness

Feeling detached or disconnected from yourself.

Prolonged use of denial may cause physical or mental illness, heart problems or depression.

3. Denial sounds like:



Other Denial tools:

- Comparing oneself to someone worse.
- Euphoric Recall, meaning to remember only the wins, and not the losses.
- Projection—like putting the projector on someone else, “Look at Joe, he’s really got some problems, but I don’t!”

4. Psychology of Denial

• Feelings

At any given time, we may be feeling different things, and many times these are uncomfortable feelings. When we lie, violate our own values and beliefs, break trust with others, we hurt (unless you are a sociopath and are not connected to your feelings at all). When we hurt someone or someone hurts us, and there is no one to talk with about it, we may decide it is not worthwhile to feel, because no one cares anyway.

• Repression

When we feel intolerable pain, and can’t bear to realize the consequences that our choices and behaviors have brought upon ourselves and others, we “Shove it down” or simply “Numb out.” This also happens when, during our lives, we are verbally or non-verbally told that our feelings don’t count. This is when compulsive gambling can be mistaken for a coping skill, used simply for escaping these negative thoughts and feelings.

• Defenses

When we become too overwhelmed with the guilt and shame of what we are doing, we start using our defense mechanisms, knowingly or unknowingly. We can even agree that we have a problem, but not do anything about it.

• Masks

This is when we put whatever face or “mask” on that we feel will help us in the current situation. It is like acting tough when feeling vulnerable, or superior when we feel inferior. Sometimes we get so good at this “acting” that we become out of touch with who we really are.

As you can see, denial and defense mechanisms can be very helpful for keeping us slaves to our addictions. What is the alternative? It is to really feel the damage we have done to our self-esteem, family, children, finances, friendships, spirituality, and co-workers with our questionable choices. Not only that, but with the amount of fallout caused by the gambling behaviors, the amount of guilt, shame, and remorse that arises can quickly overwhelm us with fear and anxiety.

During this stage of the recovery process, make sure that you have solid personal support around you, because this is almost always a very unstable time. Frankly, this is

an area where relapse and suicidal thinking can often occur. Please reach out if this happens to you. We must continuously be working on new coping skills to help us through these trying times.

Now that you have learned about Denial...GET OUT OF IT!

In order to break through the denial, you must work through the system of denial you have built for yourself. Here are the four stages of recovery within denial, referenced from John Desmet, an addictions specialist with a Veterans' hospital in Oregon.

Stage I - TOTAL DENIAL

Regardless of his or her actual life reality, the addict refuses to accept or admit the disease (or addiction).

Stage II - ADMIT (Lip Service)

Some precipitating crisis, or just the need to "get people off their back" will cause the client to "admit" to others that they really do have a disease, and that they should do something about it.

Stage III - ACCEPTANCE

Once recovery is progressing, the gambler really starts to accept and believe that he or she has the disease or addiction. This acceptance will often occur from about six weeks to three months into recovery, and can be seen by others in their "Pink Clouding."

"Pink Clouding"—Occurs when you feel great, feeling as if you have this addiction licked, and as if it was surprisingly easy to lick it. You think you will not have any problems in the future, especially with relapse.

Don't fool yourself. It takes time to change.

When the cloud dissipates, you may move back to stage I or stage II. Remember that this will be a lifetime fight. For many in the initial months of recovery, it is normal to move back and forth between stages I, II, and III. As recovery progresses, there will be more time spent in stage III, and eventually, (with some hard work) you will move into stage IV.

Stage IV - SURRENDER

Most of you will not enter this stage until after 24—36 months of recovery. (So don't be surprised if you continue to have urges.) This stage comes when you totally accept the addiction (as a disease), and you have a commitment and intense desire to do whatever is necessary to continue your recovery, and not gamble for the rest of your life. In the 12-step programs, this is referred to as "willing to go any lengths" to remain abstinent.

DENIAL and DEFENSE MECHANISMS WORKSHEET

(Emergence)

What is DENIAL?

What is the difference between LYING and DENIAL?

What have been some negative effects or consequences of DENIAL in your life?

How have DENIAL and DEFENSE MECHANISMS, as used by you, affected those around you?

How have you used DENIAL in relationship with gambling?

Why do you think compulsive gamblers and other addicts use DENIAL?

Thinking back on how your addiction progressed, how did your DENIAL change?

Choose any or all eight DEFENSE MECHANISMS. Example: rationalizing, anger, etc. Give examples of how you used them on others, and what you said to those people.

How Do You Feel About Your Gambling Today?

(AADAC 1996)

You will be asked this question throughout the recovery process and this book. This will help you to stay in touch with your feelings. By checking in with yourself regularly, the thoughts and feelings that lead to relapse will not hit you blindly.

Check the box that most closely states how you feel today.

- Denial/Minimizing**—“It’s not that bad, what’s the big deal?”
- Bargaining**—“I’ll only go two times a week,” or “I will pay you back.”
- Hope**—Genuine hopefulness: “I hope to win this time.” Or “I hope to quit this time.”
- Sadness**—Reality sets in: “I have made some bad choices.” “I have hurt others.”
- Guilt/Shame**—“How could I have let myself do this again? I even stole money.”
- Anger**—General or specific, at others, at yourself, or at the gambling itself.
- Acceptance**—“I need help, I can’t do this myself,” or “I can’t stop myself.”
- Optimism**—“I think I can quit, I am feeling more confident everyday, I feel good.”
- Contentment**—“There are other things to do besides gambling, I can fight this.”

After completing this small checklist, look back at the last time you filled it out. (Refer to page 21)

1. What is different?

2. Why do you think it is different?

3. Do you notice any patterns in your answers?

Not a failure, just not the right tool for the situation.



Chapter 13

Relapse

(Planned Gamble)

The decision to stop gambling is a difficult one, at best. The choices you make, and how you manage responsibility and accountability, will help you find recovery and a happier life. In order to stay in recovery, you must learn the cycle of addiction and the process of relapse (planned gamble) in order to stop the impulsive behavior. This includes new coping skills to fill in where the gambling left off, because gambling was your coping skill. This means finding new ways of being with ourselves, family, and friends, and new approaches to life's pressures and situations.

If problems are not dealt with in the proper way, the stress starts to build, and this can lead us to gamble to escape. Stress is a major cause of relapse—planned gamble, (but not the only one). The first ninety days of recovery are the most difficult. You will be feeling things which you have denied and shoved away by gambling. These will be uncomfortable for you to face until you become confident in your new ways of coping. Remember it takes practice to make a change in behavior, so don't give up too soon.

Relapse is not a failure...if you slip, stop immediately, and start your recovery again. This time, dissect what led to the relapse so that you can try something different next time.

When considering a relapse, think of it as a planned gamble. This means that you have planned your gamble by setting aside time and money, as well as by preparing your lies, if needed. Yes, there is a blackout with gambling, where some people have found themselves in front of a gambling machine without remembering how they got there. —But if they hadn't had the money in their pocket in the first place, they couldn't gamble.

1. What was working before you relapsed? _____

2. What can you do to get back on track? _____

I walk two paths, the path of abstinence and the path of recovery. Sometimes they are the same path, sometimes they are two separate paths. When the paths are separate and I only walk the path of abstinence, it can become the path of relapse.

(Curt P, Gambler in Recovery)

Warning Signs Leading to Relapse

Place a check mark next to any of these that could be possible symptoms or warning signs of a relapse with gambling:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wishful Thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> Irregular attendance at meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unhappy with friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Denial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resentments | <input type="checkbox"/> "I don't care" attitude |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of concentration | <input type="checkbox"/> Overconfidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open rejection of help from others | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of self-discipline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughts of gambling | <input type="checkbox"/> Stop going to support meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling a loss of control | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety or stress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tunnel Vision | <input type="checkbox"/> H A L T (hungry, angry, lonely, tired) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dishonesty | <input type="checkbox"/> Impatience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use of drugs or alcohol | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased use of alcohol or drugs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guilt and shame | <input type="checkbox"/> Using prescription meds not as prescribed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling that nothing can be solved | <input type="checkbox"/> Anger/Argumentativeness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Depression | <input type="checkbox"/> Frustration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Pity | <input type="checkbox"/> Isolation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wanting too much | <input type="checkbox"/> Listlessness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ingratitude | <input type="checkbox"/> Total dissatisfaction with life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complacency | <input type="checkbox"/> Cockiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Defensiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> Compulsive or impulsive behavior |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Think you can control gamble | <input type="checkbox"/> Immature wish to be happy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complete loss of self-confidence | <input type="checkbox"/> Plans begin to fail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Start controlled gambling | <input type="checkbox"/> Euphoric recall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of constructive planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Dissociation with self and feelings |

What are some of yours?

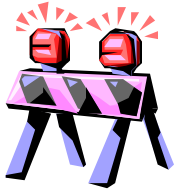
These can also be considered **SYMPTOMS** leading to relapse (a planned gamble). It is very important for others that are close in your life to know and understand these warning signs before you gamble. It can be very difficult to do, but by sharing your warning signs with those closest to you, they can help you see them before a relapse happens. Often, by the time you are fully aware of these warning signs, **DENIAL** may already have set in with your addiction. How do you know when you are experiencing a warning sign?

Again, it can be a challenge for you to share this information to others, because you may want to keep some of these as a secret, so you can gamble again someday. It may feel like you are getting “caught” or in trouble when you are told by someone else you are acting this way. I would suggest that a great tool to use is: when you tell someone about these warning signs, at the same time agree together how you may react when told.

If you have already progressed into **DENIAL**, than you may get angry at the messenger, and not accept the information. You could also make a written contract at this time, saying how you may react when confronted in a loving and caring way, so that it can be seen again with your signature, as a way to break through the **DENIAL**. Your close family and friends may already know some of your warning signs, too.—Ask them.

Terence T. Gorski developed a way to explore your warning signs:

1. Select one of your warning signs from above:
2. Description: How do you know when you are experiencing this warning sign?
3. Thinking: What are you usually thinking when you experience this warning sign?
4. Feeling: What are you usually feeling when you experience this warning sign?
5. How are you behaving when you experience this warning sign?



Here is another process for you to easily understand breaking the pattern of relapse:

Relapse looks like this:

WARNING SIGN + URGE + TRIGGER = RELAPSE

Slip or

This is the opening in the relapse cycle in which you can put a tool or coping skill to break the process of relapse.

Recovery looks like this:

WARNING SIGN + URGE + TRIGGER - COPING SKILL = RELAPSE

TOOL

NO Slip or

Notice how I have set up the diagram above. It is good to have this visual as a tool when in the process of relapse. It is important to know that you can use any of your tools or coping skills during any part of this relapse process, and not just after a trigger.

IDENTIFY THE WARNING SIGNS-

First identify the warning sign:

Ex: *Anger*

Could there be more than one warning sign?

Ex: *Anger and Self-Pity*

In most instances, there are more than one, and they multiply fast.

IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM-

What is going on in your life that is causing the warning sign to come up?

Ex: *Financial difficulties? Stress at work? Feeling low?*

BE SPECIFIC-

Is this the real problem, or is there more to it? Be specific and complete when you explore this part.

Example: *You say you are mad at your wife when you are really mad at yourself for the financial strain under which you have put your relationship.*

TOOLS/COPING SKILLS -

What tools or coping skills can you use to move away from (or **block**) the warning sign? Make sure you have more than two, in case the first or second one doesn't work.

Ex: of warning sign: *Guilt and Shame*

Ex: of tool: *Sit down and write in your journal how far you have come in your recovery.*

Ex: of warning sign: *Anxiety/Stress*

Ex: of coping skill: *Go to the gym, take a walk, and get physical, until the urge subsides.*

CHOOSE ONE-

Choose one of these tools or coping skills: There may be a different one for every different warning sign; no one tool is universal for every situation. Think it through calmly, to see if it is the best choice for you to stop the relapse process.

Ex: *Isolation*

Ex: *Pick up the phone and call someone: family, friend, or sponsor.*

MAKE A PLAN-

Make a plan of how to carry your recovery through to the end, visually seeing yourself taking the steps to follow through with your plan. What will work for you to interrupt the relapse warning signs?

a. Short-range goal: *What small steps will you take?*

b. Long-range goal: *Total removal of the warning sign(s).*

EVALUATE -

Take a look at your plan and see how effective it is for you. If the warning signs continue, you will need to fine tune your plan.

Don't just plan, work it through, practice and visualize it so that you are ready when the time arises.

Relapse prevention means making the commitment to do anything it takes to recover, and then not backing down from that fight.

Now let's practice this process.

Identify three possible warning signs for yourself:

Identify three problems that you are currently having that could be causing the signs:

Be specific with the problem—Could there be something more?

Identify two tools or coping skills for each of these three warning signs:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Now put together one tool for each warning sign, and walk your way through the process to see if you believe it will work for that situation.

- a. Short-range goal: What small steps will you take?
- b. Long-range goal: Will this remove the warning sign?
- c. Visualize the process, and walk it through to the end result.
- d. Evaluate: Do you need to change anything?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

How do you stop an elephant from charging? Take away his credit cards. (Unknown)

Triggers



Triggers are events that you may not even be aware of. It is just as it sounds: You're going along in your life without paying attention to the warning signs, an urge comes along, and BAM! There is a trigger thrown into the mess, and you are off and running, gambling.

It is possible for this to happen without your even thinking about it. What was the trigger? A trigger can originate *internally* from ourselves, or *externally* from others, or from situations around us. Triggers help release any pent-up anxiety or tension we have built up along our road to relapse. If we are not aware of our thoughts, feelings, and the way we are behaving, we will find ourselves in a slip or relapse.

Here are some examples of triggers:

Internal

- Low self-esteem
- Anger
- Selfishness
- Anxiety
- Loneliness

External

- Argument with a spouse or co-worker
- Stress at work
- Financial problems
- "Slippery Places"
- "Slippery People"
- Money in pocket

Situational

- Bad traffic
- Long line in grocery store
- Car won't start
- Anything that is out of our control

In any treatment agency, or with any anonymous support group such as GA, AA, NA, etc., you will hear about **H.A.L.T** as a trigger for any addiction.

HUNGRY

ANGRY

LONELY

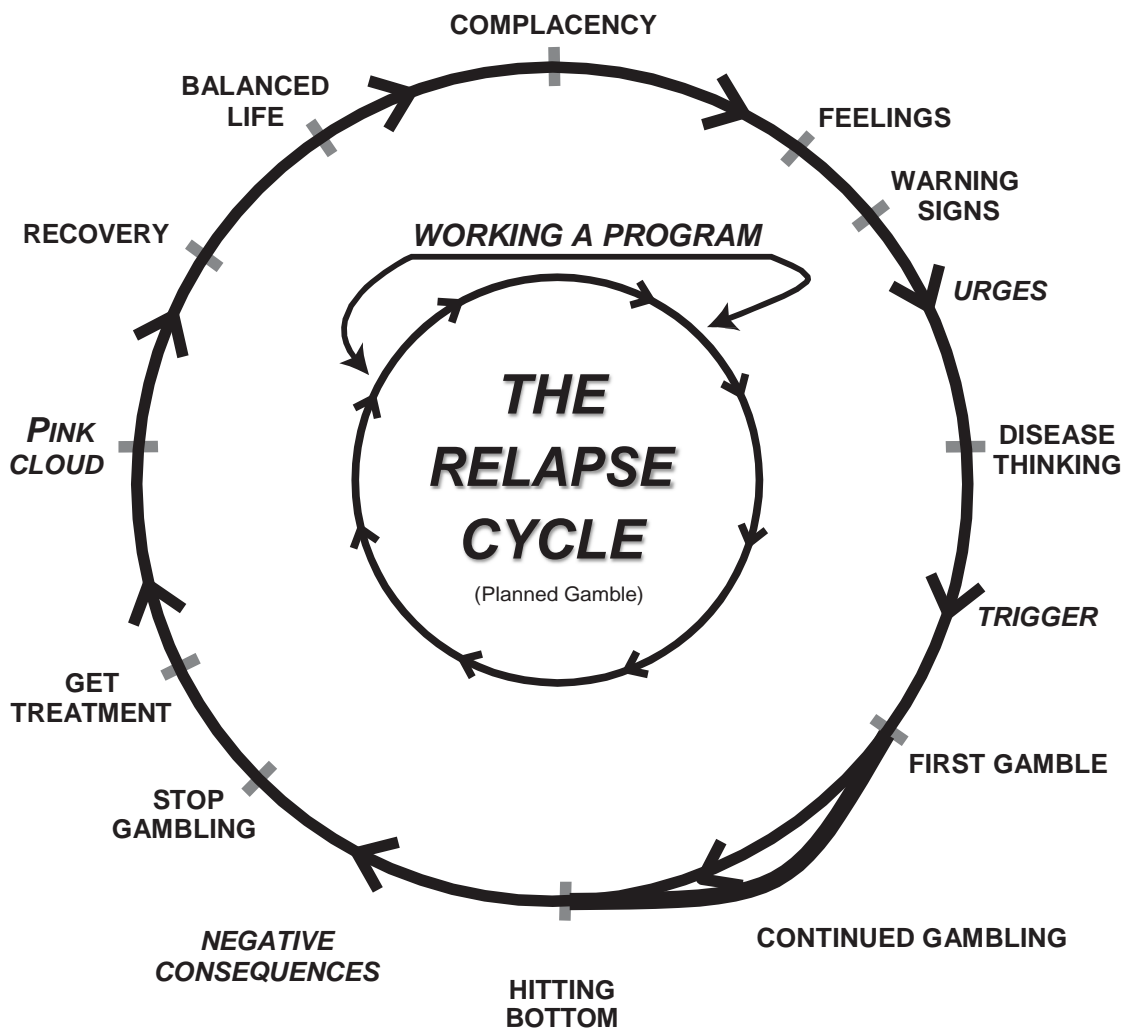
TIRED

Any one of these can cause a relapse by triggering you. Think back through your experience with your gambling; does this sound familiar? It should, because triggers affect us when we are not taking care of ourselves, or paying attention to the basic needs of our body, mind and spirit. This is when “the addict” can slip up from behind you, and take you places you don’t want to go.

What are some of your triggers?

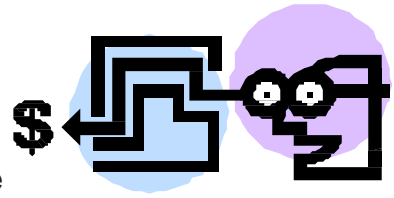
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Explore the Relapse Cycle below:



Path to Relapse

As you have already learned, relapse is not just “something that happens.” There is a whole process to its development, and if you can master and be in touch with your thoughts and feelings, you will be able to stop a relapse before it gets out of control.



Remember: **RELAPSE IS A PROCESS.**

Relapse begins with thoughts, feelings and behaviors that bring on denial, stress, bad judgment, irrational thinking, self-sabotaging behavior, and negative self-talk. A daily check-in with yourself as to how you are thinking, feeling, and behaving will be your best “Tool” to stop the relapse process.

What does relapse (return to gambling) mean to you?

How could you prevent a return to gambling?

Identify some of the situations that have happened to you previously that led to a relapse.

Many gamblers in treatment have shared how they “found” themselves in a gambling establishment without knowing or remembering how they got there. This can be called a *blackout*, much like a blackout with drug and alcohol abuse. Some have said that they gambled for a period of time and were surprised when they saw it was much longer than they thought, or they spent more money than they thought; both of these phenomena can be called a *brownout*.

Many gamblers have also said that their car “just pulled into the parking lot without their realizing it.” When we questioned them further, we found out that they thought they could drive by the establishment without consequence, just to test their progress in their recovery. To further test themselves, they then decided that they would go in, and just limit themselves with money and time. Where in this relapse process do you think they could have stopped themselves?

It is very important to really break down and analyze your relapses in a very detailed way. What was going on a week before? A day before? That morning? Where in the process were you planning and setting yourself up for the relapse?

What was happening with your family, job, spouse, finances?

Where was your support network?

How were you feeling emotionally?

How were you feeling physically?

How were you reacting to others?

Break it down even further: Remember a time that you last gambled when you had promised yourself or someone else you wouldn't.

What did you do, and how were you feeling the day of your relapse?

When you woke up in the morning.	
Half a day before gambling.	
One hour before gambling.	
15 minutes before gambling.	

1. How did you feel while gambling?
 - a. Physically _____
 - b. Emotionally _____
 - c. Thoughts _____

2. How did you feel afterward?
 - a. Physically _____
 - b. Emotionally _____
 - c. Thoughts _____

3. How did you feel when you woke up the next morning?
 - a. Physically _____
 - b. Emotionally _____
 - c. Thoughts _____

One last thought about relapse: for many people, some of the most difficult times they will have is during the holidays. Take some time to think about your holiday times. Many people are alone, or have a family that is dysfunctional. Some families have their traditions centered on drinking or gambling. There may be a lot of grief over the loss of friends and family through death and divorce, or because, in our addiction, those close to us had to walk away as a result of the negative things we had done to them. This is the hardest loss of all to deal with. This is our own unfortunate doing, and can be an extremely hard responsibility to accept.

All of these can be situations that are very uncomfortable and challenging, and our old habits or old coping skills could cause us to revert to alcohol, drugs, or gambling. If you don't have a solid support system, set yourself up with one before these situations arise. This is where your relapse prevention plan can help. It is better to PREPARE and PREVENT than to react after the damage is already done.

***Gambling will be the most important thing in your life
for the rest of your life.
You will either think about doing it
or not doing it.***

–MB, gambler in recovery

RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN

Let's work on a relapse prevention plan. This is something which you will also write on a separate piece of paper that you can carry in your wallet, so that it will be easy to get to in case of an emergency. It would be helpful with accountability for yourself if you could share this with someone that you trust. How could these people best tell you that they think you are walking the path to relapse?

List three names and numbers of someone you could trust to call and help you not gamble. Remember who you can reach at any given hour of the day:

1. Name: _____ Number: _____

2. Name: _____ Number: _____

3. Name: _____ Number: _____

List four warning signs before gambling:

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

What are your high risk situations?

External High Risk Situations for me:

Ex: Driving past my favorite place to "Test" myself.

People	Places	Time of day	Situations
1. _____			
2. _____			
3. _____			
4. _____			

Internal High Risk Situations for me:

Ex: Picking a fight with my spouse so that I can leave the house to gamble.

Behaviors Feelings Emotions Thinking Spiritually

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Four triggers that are High Risk for me:

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____

Name four Tools or Coping Skills that you can use:

1. _____ 2. _____
2. _____ 4. _____

In relapse, we “set ourselves up,” sometimes unconsciously. What I mean is that we may set up having “free” time, “extra” cash in our pocket, and “created an injustice” to motivate us.

Identify two ways that you have set yourself up to relapse in the past:

1. _____

2. _____

Don't make any decisions when you are in a highly-charged emotional or physical state.

Chapter 14

Coping Skills



Even though you have chosen to quit gambling and change your life for the better, that doesn't mean that you will not feel urges or cravings to gamble, for some time down the line, possibly for the rest of your life.

When I was in a group and individual counseling setting, I had everyone get a notebook in which to put all their "homework" papers, notes and letters. I required them to bring the notebook in to group and individual meetings. I strongly suggested that they carry this book with them everywhere they went, and to keep it accessible for the rest of their lives. This is a tool, or coping skill, for them as this book can be for you.

I believe that once you have an addiction, it is much like having a disease like heart disease, or as if you have grown a new appendage on your body. I am sure that these examples sound extreme, but think about it: If you have a disease like heart disease, you have to change your lifestyle in how you eat, exercise and take care of yourself, is that not right? Similarly, addiction is also a disease. If you grew a new arm, then you would have to acknowledge its being there everyday, and adapt to it, right? The same is true with addiction.

This is how I see addiction: once you have it, it will always be with you, for the rest of your life... But you can change your lifestyle in order to live with

If you have a disease like heart disease, you have to change your lifestyle—in how you eat, exercise and take care of yourself, is that not right? This is how I see addiction: once you have it, it will always be with you, for the rest of your life... But you can change your lifestyle in order to live with addiction.

addiction. You must acknowledge it daily so that it will not get in the way of a healthy life for you. I ran into an ex-client one day who had three years of recovery at that point, and he was carrying his notebook into a GA meeting. I was so proud of him! He shared with me that he still thinks about gambling at least a couple times a month, and that he carries his book and opens it to remember where he came from in the process of recovery.

Think about when you would want to go gamble—was it during high stress times? Fighting with your partner? Low on finances? All of these types of situations will continue; they are all just a normal part of life. You used gambling as a coping skill for these times, so now what will you use instead? If you don't find new coping skills to replace the gambling, you may find it very difficult to fight the cravings and urges.

It is **very normal** to have these cravings, and as time goes on and you continue to gain new coping skills, the cravings will come further and further apart, and not last as long. These cravings can make you feel very uncomfortable, and you may not think you will be able to get through them in the beginning. Therefore it is important to find new ways to deal with life on life's terms as soon as possible. You can ride them out with the proper tools, but you need to have the "tool box" ready when they happen. Let's work through some possible skills you can use:

Accept the truth that cravings are a normal process in recovery.

Find healthy alternatives to replace the gambling.

Share your cravings with others. The disease "loves secrets."

Use your support network to ride the craving through.

Use positive self-talk, telling yourself that you're on the right path to recovery.

Eat well and exercise.

Stay busy and focused.

Recognize the warning signs and triggers.

Stay away from "Slippery places" and "Slippery people."

(Gambling establishments and gambling friends)

Reward yourself for not gambling.

Ask for help from someone else.

Plan ahead.

Stay focused on things that are in your control.

List three coping skills that you can use:

Coping Skills Practice



Craving Escape Skills

- _____ Accepting that cravings are a normal part of my recovery process
- _____ Recognizing and acknowledging a craving and moving through it
- _____ Finding alternative activities to reduce cravings
- _____ Recognizing and avoiding my triggers
- _____ Using my self-talk to remind me that I don't want to gamble
- _____ Share the craving, don't keep it a secret, let someone know

Stress Reduction Skills

- _____ Be open and honest, free from harmful secrets
- _____ Concentrating my efforts on things that are in my control
- _____ Letting go of the things that are not in my control
- _____ Choosing wise eating and exercise choices
- _____ Staying organized and staying busy in my day
- _____ Confronting my fears, taking prompt action to do so
- _____ I will not isolate, I will use the support system I have built

Gambling and Other Drug and Alcohol Refusing Skills

- _____ Staying away from slippery people
- _____ Staying away from slippery places
- _____ Removing myself from high risk situations
- _____ Being direct and putting up boundaries
- _____ Call a support person
- _____ Reward myself for following through with refusal

Communication Skills

- _____ Starting a conversation using "I" statements
- _____ Listening to what others have to say
- _____ Asking for help when needed
- _____ Using body language in a positive way
- _____ Being direct and assertive
- _____ Making eye contact



Accepting Criticism Skills

- _____ Asking for feedback from others
- _____ Showing appreciation for others feedback
- _____ Showing an openness to others opinions
- _____ Accepting and following sound advice
- _____ Recovering quickly from hurt or angry feelings
- _____ Selecting the appropriate people to ask for help

Decision Making Skills

- _____ Planning ahead
- _____ Use common sense and objective thinking
- _____ Asking for others opinions on issues and decisions
- _____ Looking for a variety of differing ideas
- _____ Thinking through all possible positive and negative outcomes or consequences
- _____ Sticking to my good decisions

Anger Management Skills

- _____ Control my rage by deep breathing and walking away if necessary
- _____ Keeping myself from making hurtful or angry remarks I will regret later
- _____ Accepting my limitations
- _____ Practicing patience
- _____ Expressing my anger in appropriate ways
- _____ Offering forgiveness to others

Relationship Building Skills

- _____ Sharing my feelings
- _____ Offering my assistance and support
- _____ Respecting others rights and opinions
- _____ Putting in quality time
- _____ Being sensitive to others' feelings
- _____ Being trustworthy and trusting



In all of the skills listed above what benefits will I gain by strengthening these skills?

Who are the people in your life that can help you practice these skills?



Write about a time when you used a coping skill and were successful:

Write about a time when you used a coping skill unsuccessfully:

What made it successful?

What made it unsuccessful?

How can you improve on the unsuccessful coping skill used?

Would another coping skill have been a better choice for the situation?

Coping with Stress



1. Focus on Today:

Concentrate on the activities and issues of today. Let go of yesterday and let tomorrow wait. When you are bothered by guilt from past behavior or preoccupied with worry about the future, your stress level will be high for the present.

This is how I can keep my focus in the present today: _____

2. Schedule your Time Wisely:

Don't schedule too many activities for the day but make sure you have all your time filled. Free time can be the most dangerous time for addiction to surface. Be sure you provide for relaxation periods even 5 minutes long with deep breathing. This will help calm your nerves.

This is how I will organize my time wisely: _____

3. Stay Honest with Yourself and Others:

Part of recovery is rigorous honesty which helps you find serenity. It allows you to take responsibility for your behaviors and takes the stress out of being dishonest to friends and family. Honesty is the foundation and stability for your recovery, life and relationships.

This is how I will remain honest with myself and others: _____



4. Begin to Deal with Your Finances:

Work on a financial assessment with your counselor, family member, friend, sponsor, or mentor. Begin by listing all outstanding debts. Use chapter 17 (page 98) to help you do your financial budgeting. Be sure you are ready for this, so you don't add more stress, causing relapse because of overwhelming feelings associated with money. Deal with your bills and creditors as soon as possible.

This is how I can start small steps to regain my finances: _____

5. Find a Physical Outlet or Exercise you Enjoy:

Start slow if you haven't been physical in some time. Go for a brisk walk, ride a bike or swim, anything that gets your body moving. Physical exercise is a great way to reduce stress. It moves adrenaline through and out of your body if you are craving gambling or anything else.

This is an exercise I can commit to this week: _____

6. Confront your Fears:

If you know you are going to have a stressful or difficult situation coming up identify your feelings first and then your fears. Write or journal about them. What in your past has happened to make you fearful of this particular situation? Talk about your fears with this issue with your counselor or anyone else you trust.

This is how I will confront my fears: _____



7. Find your Own Sacred Place and Time:

This is a quiet place to sit with yourself away from life's stressors. A place you can breathe, meditate, or visualize calming yourself. The best would be at a certain time each day in a certain place. Then if there is a time you can't get there you can think and visualize this place and continue to calm yourself.

This is my calming place and time: _____

8. Learn to be Assertive with Others:

Take responsibility for identifying and meeting your own needs. Communicate this with others with a clear, open and emotionally honest way. Know your rights and stand up for them but do not be aggressive with your approach. Appreciate yourself, your strengths, your abilities, and your uniqueness.

This is how I will be assertive with others: _____

9. Get a Good Nights Sleep:

Recovery from compulsive gambling will go more smoothly if you can establish a regular sleep pattern. Many gamblers have had fitful or missed nights sleep because of the stress caused by the gambling behavior.

This is how I will set up a regular sleep pattern and ways that will help me relax enough to go to sleep: _____

10. Share your Secrets:

Keeping secrets is a large part of gambling addiction. It is a “secret” addiction. Try to stay open to others and regain their trust in you. Let them see the person you can be without gambling.

This is a secret I have yet to tell anyone and will share it with someone: _____



11. Lastly and Most Importantly Laugh at Yourself!

Living a stressful addictive life is tiring and humorless. It is time to find humor in your mistakes. Give yourself permission to be imperfect. (Now that’s a relief!) If you do this around others you will see a great change in how they react to you in a more supportive way and have better communication and honesty with you.

This is how I will not take myself and life so seriously: _____

If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything. (Mark Twain)

Chapter 15



Tools To Stop Gambling

Remember to “Play the Tape” through; this means to visualize what the gambling episode will look and feel like, all the way from the “Action,” or “feel” in the beginning, to the “crash” at the end, and the negative consequences, or the “fallout,” that results. You don’t want to spend too much time nurturing or harboring thoughts of gambling, but rather, you should focus more on what negative consequences your addictive behavior may cause in the end: Loss of money, severe depression, constant fighting with a spouse, loss of self-value, etc.

Anytime you leave someplace, be it work, a meeting, GA, or working out at a gym, call a support person and tell them that you are leaving, where you are, and how long it should take you to get home. This is your effort at ACCOUNTABILITY, so that you cannot allow yourself to fall into temptation and stop to gamble on your way home.

Get three 3” x 5” index cards, and on one side, write:

- a. Your worst negative consequence from
- b. Why it is you don’t want to gamble

Remember how it feels
when you get done

**gambling and have lost all
your money...**

On the other, write:

- c. Three positive activities to replace gambling.
- d. Three names and phone numbers you can call if you need to.

When you have done this, put one card in your wallet, one in your car (visor), and one somewhere in your house, so that the information is always handy to get to in an emergency.

If you have a partner, spouse, or children, keep a picture of them on your car visor, your refrigerator, or your front door. There is no greater deterrent to self-destructive behavior than to see the happy, loving faces of your loved ones looking at you!!

Now get some more 3” x 5” index cards (colorful ones help, psychologically speaking, for the brain to remember). On these cards, write a word or words that will remind you everyday that *you don't want to gamble!*

For example: Put a card on your front door, or bathroom mirror, that says, “I choose not to gamble today.” Or “Play the tape” or “Stop, don’t gamble!” or “One day at a time!”

Don’t forget that you can use this same tool for *positive* affirmations, and to change your negative and irrational thinking habits. For example: “Yes I can!” or “Honesty.” or “Life is good when I am not gambling!”

The reason that this displaying such cards for yourself is such a great tool is that if you look at the word everyday and say it out loud, your brain will incorporate it into your thoughts as a habit and a positive thought, instead of as a negative one. If there comes a time when you don’t really notice it anymore (which can and will happen), choose a new one, and work on that.

You are in a relationship with money, whether you think of it in these terms or not, and like the other relationships in your life, this one needs work to make it successful.
(Suze Orman)

Chapter 16



Emotional Meaning of Money

This chapter will help you explore the emotional meaning of money and how personal beliefs and values surrounding money can cause problems in your life. It is important to understand the distorted relationship between problem gamblers, their money, and the problems money creates in their life.

This chapter will help you recognize your attachment or detachment with money. I mean for you to take a look at your relationship with money, how you spend it, and explore any thinking errors you use to spend and gamble with it. It is often true that if we are impulsively gambling money we may very well be impulsively spending money. Money can be uncomfortable and there can be a lot of pressure with money in many forms.

We are all taught either verbally or non-verbally ways of dealing with money from the day we are born. I believe it will help you to see where your beliefs and values came from if you were to look back at your childhood. What do you remember about the way those close to you dealt with their money, or how they taught you to deal with your money? How many of us were even taught how to use a checkbook? Or how to start a savings account? Or track how much we are spending and on what?

Some of your beliefs may be working well for you and some may not. We need to take them out and look at them to decide if it is time to throw away any bad beliefs that aren't working. As we change in our lifetime so does the need for our beliefs to change. Some may no longer be worthwhile and we may need some new ones that fit better in our current lifestyle.

A Belief is not merely an idea the mind possess; it is an idea that possess the mind.
(Robert Bolt)

Let's start exploring the emotional meaning of money with these few questions:

Write down the first 10 words that come to mind when you think of the word "money."

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 10. _____ |

- Circle all of the words that you think have a negative connotation.
- Are these words a surprise to you in any way?
- Do you see a connection or significance with the words you chose?



Write 3 things you are proud of in terms of your relationship with money.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Write 3 things you feel badly about in terms of your relationship to money.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Which is the easier list to complete? Why?



Money can be a mood altering state of mind that can rule ones life and interfere with relationships. Addictive money problems can lead to relapses with gambling, using drugs and drinking. Money has been used over time in both positive and negative ways.

Here are a few ways money can be used:

Power/Control	Security	Self-Esteem/Self-Worth
Attractiveness	Success	Freedom
Magical Thinking		Love/Sexuality

Can you give examples of each of these? Here are just a couple:

Magical thinking:

“I didn’t spend my money, I used a credit card.”

“I can pay off this credit card by moving it to a lesser interest card.”

“I don’t have enough money to pay my bills; I will take this \$50, gamble and double my money.”

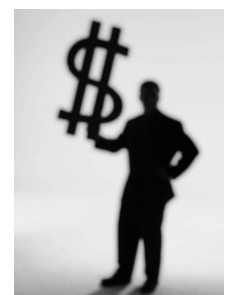


ATM and Credit Cards = Power

When we talk about money beliefs, all these examples above are money beliefs. Don’t forget if we have a belief about something, then we behave in a way that causes results. Take a look at chapter 19 about beliefs (pg 117). These results can have positive or negative consequences. It is the belief that drives the behavior that gives us the end results.

How would you describe a good relationship with money?

How could you improve your relationship with money?





Fun with Artwork

Draw one of the memories below or choose one of your own:

- Your happiest memory of money
- Your most painful memory of money
- Your first memory of money



Build Your Own Barriers to Money

When trying to stop impulsive spending or compulsive gambling we need to set up barriers to the money. The more barriers, the more difficult it is to be impulsive and get your hands on the money. That is a powerful way to stop the behavior. If you can't get your hands on money you can't continue the behaviors of spending or gambling.

One barrier will slow you down maybe long enough until the craving passes. Sometimes it takes more than one barrier. Here is where accountability with another person and your money can come in handy.

Here are some things to think about....

- What is your access to money?
- When do you get paid next?
- What is your safety plan for your money?
- Do you have your check automatically deposited?
- How much access to money do you really need?
- What is the most amount of money you need in a day? For lunch?
Cup of coffee? Pop?
- Now what is the least money it would take for you to gamble?
- Find an amount between the most money you need in a day, and the least amount of money it takes to gamble. This is the amount you should carry in your pocket:
\$5.00 or \$10.00
- Take a few minutes and explore ways to put up barriers to acquire money to gamble.

It might take years to pay off your financial problems, but you can think more clearly tomorrow, if you take the day off of worrying about them today.

Chapter 17

Money and Finances



Before we begin talking about finances in general, let's explore the emotional meaning and ramifications of having, using, and even possibly abusing, *money*

After you have been gambling for some time, whether it is a matter of months or years, money no longer seems like money. You may have lost all respect and value for it.



A gambler once told me, "(Money) is just a vehicle for me to get what I need from gambling. I have no idea how much money I have put into the machines, nor do I have any idea how much I have won or lost. It's not about the money, or winning, anymore."

Money is a difficult subject for many of us to handle, whether we are in recovery or not, a gambler or not. For some reason, society has

led us to believe that our finances should be a secret, as in: "It is no one's business how much I make, no one's business how much I have in the bank, and it is no one's business how much money I have lost, gambling!"

**It's not about the money,
because gamblers have to
gamble until the money is gone...
It is more about thoughts and
fantasies of the "Big win."**

Gamblers seem to have less of an emotional attachment to money than most people do.

What about you? How do you feel about money?

- "Easy come, easy go!"*
- It is burdensome.*
- There is too much responsibility associated with money.*
- There is too much stress associated with money.*

Obsession with money can be an actual disorder... really! It is full of secrets and mystery. Until you can understand your relationship with, and build a healthy amount of respect for money, you will never find value in it, and it won't be worth anything to you.

In today's gambling world, quite often we don't even need any cash in hand to gamble. Video Poker Machines can be run with a type of credit card. You plug the card into the gambling machine, and gamble away! You have no idea how much money you are really spending... the amount only shows up as credits. After you have won, you print out a piece of paper to go collect your money.

The fascination with money isn't even about seeing or hearing the money fall out of the machine—over time, you could be putting hundreds of dollars in the machine and winning back much less, but you tend to forget how much you have had to put in to win back that amount. I would definitely call that type of activity a disorder.

Now let's explore the nature of *your* relationship with money, and how that relationship forged your existing value system concerning money:

- 1. What was your first memory of money as a child?**

- 2. What is your happiest memory of money?**

- 3. What is your worst memory of money?**

- 4. What did your parents teach you about handling money?**

- 5. How are you affected by money?**
 - a. Positively?

 - b. Negatively?

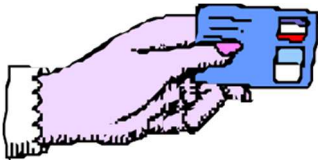
- 6. How do you feel about receiving financial credit?**

- 7. Do you pay off your credit regularly?**

Here are some sobering thoughts about the reality of receiving financial credit in this day and age:

Minimum payments on bank credit cards work like this, and are very costly in the long run:

If you have an 18.5% interest rate on your credit card, and if you pay only the minimum payment monthly, it will take you more than eleven years to pay off a debt of \$2,000.



During this time, you will pay interest charges of \$1,934.00, almost doubling the original charge.

If you owe \$2,500 and charge only an additional \$25 each month at 19% interest, and are faithfully paying the \$52 minimum each billing period, when will you be debt free?...

You will never be debt free!

If you began this cycle at age 25, by the time you're 65, you'll have paid \$24,960 in interest, and still have a balance owing of \$2,500. Just think of all the fun, wonderful, productive and constructive things that you could have done with the \$24,960!

I don't know about you, but I find this shocking!: A frighteningly high percentage of adults in our society have severe credit card problems, *especially* gamblers. If *you* have problems with credit cards, then there is no reason to have more than *one* credit card, and that for *emergencies only!* There are many dangerous aspects of gambling and blindly seeking the rush associated with it.

Think about this:

1. Part of the "gamble," or one aspect of the thrill of gambling, is the juggling of money. For example, let's imagine that you have used some money to gamble that you shouldn't have, and LOST!... Where did you *get* that money from? A credit card? Your checking account? Now, you have to scramble to *replace* the money that you knew you should never have gambled away in the first place. A large part of the gambler's "high" is caused by the adrenaline rush that comes with the realization that one has lost valuable money, and with the stress of trying to figure out where to get the money before being confronted by a spouse or a partner!

Another part of the thrill comes when you move money from one place to another. This is called, "Stealing from Peter to pay Paul." Wouldn't you agree from memory of experience about the excitement, or "rush," it causes? You still don't have the money to replace the lost money, but psychologically, you fool yourself into thinking you paid it back. You really are just digging yourself further in the proverbial "hole."

Speaking of “digging”... another part of the thrill of the gamble comes after digging a hole for yourself, where the *new* challenge and thrill you face involves getting yourself out of the hole. We “win” again and again after we successfully dig ourselves out, until we dig another hole for ourselves the next time, and the next, and the next,.....

Now, let’s get into a financial plan for you to work through. Please be aware of how you are feeling when doing this part, it can cause severe anxiety and throw you into relapse.

Remember, money has been our tool, our means, to gamble, and mastering it may have been a valuable coping skill for life’s stressors. During our gambling indulgences, we don’t always pay attention to the financial damage we are causing in our lives, do we? In fact, we have gone out of our way not to look at what we are doing, because if we were to see the amount of damage we caused, we would have to admit to our totally dysfunctional problem with gambling. If you are having a lot of difficulty with this financial exercise, work through it with someone you trust, be it your counselor, your therapist, friend, spouse, or your GA group.



Don’t, however, make the fatal error of making your financial management plan *too* terribly limiting on your day-to-day living budget, for if you were to take away *all* of your personal pleasures in life, you could become resentful, overreact, and spontaneously backslide into gambling. The excessive immediate deprivation could “*trigger*” old superstitious beliefs and irrational thinking patterns. Maybe you would start fantasizing that a “Big Win” could save you financially, and get you out of debt.

Remember that that is not the truth, or else you would not be in the financial position with debt that you are currently, and probably, chronically, in. Gambling didn’t work for you... Did it? I wouldn’t think you would be reading this book!

On a positive note, you may well have developed skills because of and related to your gambling addiction, that could aid you in your attempts at money management. These skills may include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- Resourcefulness**
- Creative financial skills**
- Movement of money**
- Summoning the necessary energy to get money**
- Time management**

Now, you can begin to use these worksheets to get yourself out of debt. I am sure that you like a challenge, so here is one: I have said earlier in this book that you should get all your bills together, and keep only the most recent one from each account on which you owe money. One of my clients had a pile bigger than their dining room table of bills he hadn't looked at for many months. This appeared overwhelming to him, so he refused to look at them. He had someone from a group that he trusted over to his house to help him go through them all. He then brought them into my office, and we wrote them all down, and came up with a plan...

These plans are slow-going if you have a lot of debt. Don't expect it all to be fixed right away. It could take several months or years. Some gamblers have lost all of their retirement and savings money, and may *never* be able to replace that money.

So now, let's start by writing down your monthly income:

Income Sources Monthly	You	Spouse
Wages after taxes	\$	\$
Tips or commissions from a sale (average)	\$	\$
Social Security	\$	\$
Food stamps	\$	\$
Investment income (interest, dividends)	\$	\$
Unemployment benefits	\$	\$
Pensions retirement payments	\$	\$
Child support	\$	\$
Trust fund	\$	\$
Inheritance	\$	\$
Welfare/disability	\$	\$
Other	\$	\$
Total Income	\$	\$
Total Income for both	\$	

Now let's take a look at your monthly expenses—estimate them if necessary:

Housing:	Mortgage/Rent	\$ _____
	Property Taxes/Fees	\$ _____
Utilities:	Electricity	\$ _____
	Telephone	\$ _____
	Water/Sewer	\$ _____
	Heat/Gas	\$ _____
	Cable/Satellite	\$ _____
	Computer/DSL	\$ _____
	Long Distance Charges	\$ _____
Transportation:	Car Payment	\$ _____
	Gas	\$ _____
	Bus/Taxi	\$ _____
	Parking Fees	\$ _____
Food:	Eating out	\$ _____
	Groceries	\$ _____
Recreation:	Entertainment	\$ _____
	Sports/ Hobbies	\$ _____
	Babysitter	\$ _____
Insurance:	Car/Truck	\$ _____
	Health	\$ _____
	Home	\$ _____
	Life	\$ _____
Personal:	Cigarettes	\$ _____
	Alcohol	\$ _____
	Personal Hygiene	\$ _____
Other:	Back Income Taxes Owed	\$ _____
	Credit Cards	\$ _____
	Loans	\$ _____
	Newspaper/Magazines	\$ _____
	Child Care	\$ _____
	Gifts B-Day/Xmas	\$ _____
	Travel/Vacation	\$ _____
	Gambling Debts	\$ _____
	Gambling Related Arrest/Bail/Fines	\$ _____
	Attorney's/Legal Fees	\$ _____
	Gambling Treatment/Counseling	\$ _____
	Gambling Restitution	\$ _____
	Recreation	\$ _____
	Education	\$ _____
	Laundry/Cleaning	\$ _____



TOTAL MONTHLY EXPENSES: A. \$ _____

There are a few annual expenses that you will need to add up and divide by twelve in order to get an estimate to add to your monthly expenses.

Clothing Family Total	\$ _____
Property Taxes	\$ _____
Education Books/Supplies, etc.	\$ _____
Medical: Prescriptions	\$ _____
Dentist	\$ _____
Eye Doctor	\$ _____
Maintenance: Home	\$ _____
Vehicles	\$ _____
Business Expenses	\$ _____
Licenses/Certificates	\$ _____

Total Annual Expenses: \$ _____
 ÷ 12 =
 B. \$ _____

Add Column A. and B. From Above **A.+ B. = \$ _____ = Total Monthly Expenses**

<u>Total Monthly Income</u> \$ _____	<u>Total Monthly Expenses</u> \$ _____
--	--

So how do these two figures match up? Take a deep breath... close your eyes, and tell yourself that it may look overwhelmingly impossible to accomplish right now, but that, with time and determination, this monstrous financial and emotional debt can be addressed, and hopefully, resolved and healed.

“One small step, or one bill, at a time.”

Let's look at ways in which we can improve this financial deficit ratio:

What are some possible ways in which you can add to your income?

Example: Second job.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 10. _____ |

How much income do you think this can add monthly? \$ _____
(Ask others for their ideas)

What are some possible ways you can cut your expenses back?

Example: Don't subscribe to newspaper or magazines.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 10. _____ |

How much expense do you think this can save you monthly? \$ _____
(Ask others for their ideas)

Here are a few hints for you:

1. One of the best ways to reduce debt is to **tackle the high interest loans** (Checks for cash can charge interest rates up to 500%), and credit balances (with or without high interest rates possibly 24%). As you learned earlier in this section, paying the minimum on credit bills does nothing for you. Get rid of these first.

2. Once you have all of your financial paperwork organized in the worksheet, don't "slack off." Keep it visible and

updated as you pay off bills, or somehow control your expenses. Open your mail everyday so that it doesn't start to stack up on you again.

You have tackled the hardest part of the financial section, so, "Congratulations!"

This part of recovery takes a lot of courage and determination.

The obsession with handling, controlling, and frivolously wasting, money will lose its lethal grip on you eventually. When you truly understand how emotionally tied to it you are, and that that unhealthy bond is what keeps you gambling, you will put a new value and worth to money, as well as to your own self and being.

3. The obsession with handling, controlling, and frivolously wasting, money will lose its lethal grip on you eventually. When you truly understand how emotionally tied to it you are, and that that unhealthy bond is what keeps you gambling, you will put a new value and worth to money, as well as to your own self and being. You must learn to respect the proper use of money, or you will be trying to get yourself out of the same, but ever-deepening, financial "hole," again and again and again.



The last subject which I wish to address right now is that of getting in touch with your creditors... DON'T RUN!!! I know that this is a very difficult feat, and it takes a lot of bravery to do...

...So, remember to breathe, to talk assertively, and to be honest...but only tell your creditors how much you can pay them, and when you can make payments—for if you overestimate your payments, and don't follow through with paying them, it could mean even direr, negative consequences for your already bad financial situation. Please remember that we are trying to get rid of these negative consequences in your life, not make them worse.

The first person you talk to on the phone may not even be the person with whom you set up a payment plan. The creditor may take as little as \$20 monthly, but remember about minimum payments—your goal is to pay off these creditors, not to extend your payment plans indefinitely. Some of my clients feel that when they were honest with the creditors about the fact that they were working on their recovery from gambling, the credit company responded more favorably to their debtors because of their honorable and conscientious intentions.

- Phone calls are effective means of communication to and with credit companies, just as long as you follow through, and pay as you said you would.
- When you call your creditors up directly and personally, and take responsibility for your actions, honesty will help open communication and negotiation to resolve the debt. Doing this constitutes a BIG step in your full recovery.
- This is how your addiction and financial/money issues don't run you. You take control and run your own life. It will get better over time.
- The creditors like it if you reach out and seem to be trying to work on the debt. You will find that they will respond better to you when you are "up-front" and honest with them, so that they don't have to "chase" you down.

This is how your addiction and financial/money issues don't run you. You take control and run your own life. It will get better over time.

When calling creditors, be assertive, but practice a few times first, for they

settling your previously-unaddressed debt easy for you. Also, don't call all of them in one day... space them out, so that the effort is not so overwhelming, or even emotionally exhausting, for you. If there is someone you trust to help you, have them be there with you for moral support.

Take your personal financial power back!—And face your own personal guilt and shame, thereby permanently cleansing your will and your soul... then recovery will be complete for you.

Take a moment to write about your day:



*Every one of life's challenges you make it through today
can be an opportunity for you tomorrow.*

PART THREE: LIFE ISSUES



Try not to become a man of success but rather a man of value. (Albert Einstein)

Chapter 18

Values



One thing that happens not only to gamblers or addicts, but to all of us at some point, is that we forget what our core, traditional values are. Maybe we hadn't even thought about values before, or even tried to understand what a value is.

• **Webster's dictionary definition of value is:** *That which is desirable or worthy of esteem for its own sake; a thing or quality having intrinsic worth.*

-Intrinsic meaning *from inside ourselves*

Values are a most fundamental resource that we have to guide our lives and the life-affecting decisions that we make. Values come from deep inside ourselves, and they make us who we are, what we believe in, and how we act. They determine how we want to live our lives. Values give us purpose and direction for the way we behave in this world, with ourselves and with those around us.

During our lives we may acquire new values, or we may abandon some values that we previously thought were important, but are no longer. This type of change can also affect our belief systems, and we will talk about beliefs further on in the book.

Also, during our lives, we may develop a Coping Skill to help us through the difficult times that life too often brings us. These Coping Skills can have such a hold on us that they end up turning into an addiction. We think that we cannot survive without this new Coping Skill, whether it be gambling, overeating, drugs, alcohol, or sex addiction. When this happens, the addictive tendency immediately goes against our value system, so, in order to continue the addiction, we drop our values. After a while, we have forgotten what our values were in the first place, and why they were so important to us. Values are what help us make the right choices in life. Some of our values we have formulated at a very young age, and most probably were influenced by parents and other elders, in our lives. This type of values is called Core Values.

There are four basic core values that help us make the right choices, and helps us maintain a responsible lifestyle:

Tolerance:

This value has much to do with respecting the beliefs, opinions, and behaviors of others, in a fundamentally non-judgmental way. This attitude of respect allows us all to live in a free society happily with each other, and helps us all to learn and grow from other peoples' thoughts, ideas, and beliefs.

Honesty:

People who are truly honest value what they say and how they act towards others, especially by never *taking advantage of* another human being. Honest people are dependable, and can be trusted.

Caring:

People who are caring can understand and empathize with others' needs, wants, feelings, and problems. It matters to caring people what another human being is thinking or feeling. This instinctual sentiment is completely unselfish, and caring people understand that it takes more than just themselves to make up the diverse world in which we all live together. Caring people fully understand that what they do always affects others around them.

Responsibility:

Responsibility means making thoughtful and appropriate choices, making the right choice for any given situation, both for your own well-being and that of everyone who could be affected by your decision. Responsibility does not justify making selfish choices.

Think back to a time before you could have benefited from this book, before your gambling habits took control of your life; think about what your values were.....

- Who were you then, and how are you different now?

- When did this or these value(s) change for you?

- Why do you think the value(s) changed?
- Have you seen the four core values change for you? Why or why not?
- Does your gambling problem have anything to do with your change in value(s)?

Here is a list of some of the many human values that there are; pick the ten of these values that you feel are most important to you:

Industry	to work hard and well at life's unlimited tasks
Pleasure	to feel good
Dependability	to be reliable and trustworthy
Humor	to see the humorous side of myself and the world
Intimacy	to share myself and feelings with others
Power	to have control over others
Accuracy	to be correct in my opinions and actions
Faithfulness	to be loyal and reliable in relationships
Honesty	to be truthful and genuine
Wealth	to have everything you need, always!
Spirituality	to grow spiritually
Adventure	to have new and exciting experiences
Caring	to take care of others
Justice	to promote fair and equal treatment for all
Leisure	to take time to relax and enjoy
Popularity	to be well-liked by people
Beauty	to enjoy my surroundings
Compassion	to feel concern for others
God's Will	to seek and to obey the Will of God
Logic	to live rationally and sensibly
Monogamy	to have one close relationship
Risk	to take necessary risks and chances
Service	to help others
Self-esteem	to like myself as I am
Health	to be physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy
Acceptance	to fit in with others
Complexity	to have a life full of variety and change
Hope	to have a positive, optimistic outlook
Loving	to give love to others
Lovability	to be loved by others
Stability	to live a constant, stable life

Pick ten:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 6. _____
- 10. _____

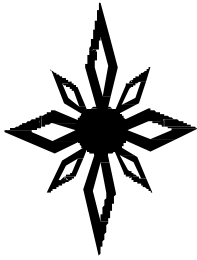
Now choose three of these values that have been affected in some way by your gambling... Describe how your life reflected these three values before the gambling obsession took hold of your heart, mind, and senses, and how those three values have changed since, in your own heart, especially. How could you get back in touch with those three values?

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

The first time you do anything in your life, it can be difficult, intimidating, and daunting, but it does get easier the second time you do it.



Chapter 19

Beliefs

Hyrum Smith, founder of the Galileo Initiative, developed the Galileo Reality Model, which represents the process by which personal beliefs influence our behavior and the results we achieve. I will now present you a brief part of the model, and if you like what you see, you can look up more information about it at www.galileoinitiative.com, or study and work through it with a counselor or a therapist. Try to work through the process a couple of times yourself to see if it works for you. If it does, that is magical! The basic premise is a good one for understanding how your beliefs and behaviors cause results that may or may not be good for you.

... if you continue to do the same thing over and over again, expecting different results with the same behavior, then, maybe, you should change what you are doing...

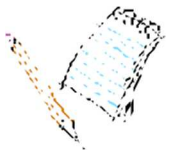
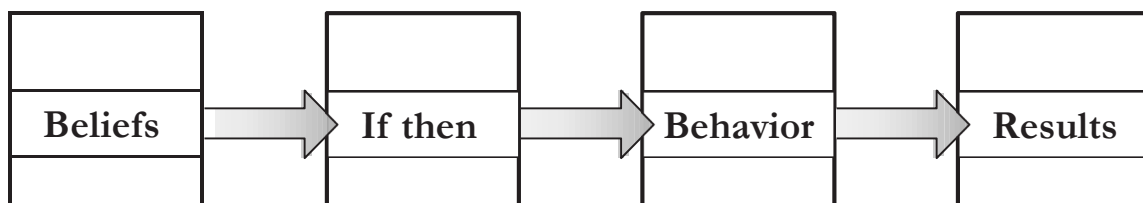
Have you ever heard that if you continue to do the same thing over and over again, expecting different results with the same behavior, then, maybe, you should change what you are doing? Here are some of the lessons learned from the Galileo Reality Model. After we review these, we will walk through part of the Galileo Reality Model process.

- ***If the results of your behavior do not meet your needs, then you may be taking an ineffective course of action.***
- ***Results take time to measure.***
- ***Growth is the process of changing beliefs.***
- ***Destructive behavior is the result of deep, unmet needs.***
- ***If your self-worth is dependent only on external feedback, you are missing something.***
- ***When the results of your behavior DO meet your needs over time, then alone will you experience peace.***

Here is how to walk through the Galileo Reality Model:

1. Identify a behavior of yours that you would like to change.
2. Identify possible beliefs that support the behavior you want to change.
3. Predict your possible future behavior, based on those beliefs.
4. Identify other beliefs that might produce the results you want.
5. Predict possible future behavior based on the new beliefs.

I have found that you can work through this process from any starting point. It may be easier if you start with the results, and work backward. Always remember will it work long term or short term? We want things to work over the long term.



Notes:

Example:

• **Belief:**

“Gambling wins me free money.”

• **If/Then:**

“If gambling wins me free money, then I will definitely be able win back today the money that I lost by gambling yesterday, so that I can get myself out of ‘the hole.’”

• **Behavior:**

“I go and gamble.”

• **Results:**

“I not only lost the money I took with me today, but I didn’t win back my losses from yesterday, and now I can’t pay my rent/mortgage.”

Now, from above, let's work through the process:

- Identify a belief you would like to change:
Gambling wins me free money.

Your belief? _____

1. Identify possible beliefs that support your behavior.

- I won before.
- I am due to win.
- I am feeling lucky today.

Other beliefs that support your behavior: _____

2. Predict future behavior based on those beliefs.

- I will continue to lose.
- I will need to borrow money from someone.
- I will need to write a bad check to pay the rent/mortgage. (Illegal act)

Predict future behavior: _____

3. Identify other beliefs that might produce the results you want.

- You never win anything for free.
- I can make the money at my job to pay the rent/mortgage.
- You lose more than you win gambling.

What beliefs might produce better results? _____

4. Predict future behavior based on the new beliefs.

- I won't lose the money for rent/mortgage because I won't gamble to get it.
- I will be saving money when I don't gamble to take my family on a vacation.

Future behavior: _____

This process can work in any area of your life. Whenever you are not getting the results you want, check and see why not. What are your beliefs about the issue you are working on? Are you having difficulty with a relationship, for example? Could you have beliefs that were handed to you by some authority figure when you were young, and which do not work for you today? Work it through with the Galileo Reality model.

Everything that you experience, both good and bad, can give you new eyes in which to see yourself and your place in the world.

Chapter 20



Feelings and Emotions

One of the root causes of addiction of any kind is repressing feelings and emotions. We may have learned to do this, growing up in emotionally unhealthy families which did not allow us to express how we were feeling, or to show our emotions. This type of repression can be taught to us both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that we don't even realize. You may know the old sayings, "Big boys don't cry," or "Buck up, and quit your whining." Maybe our parents never showed any deep emotion in front of us during childhood, or maybe they didn't cry in front of others, or argue (but in a healthy manner). So how could we learn to

handle our feelings or emotions in a healthy manner?

One of the reasons we escape to an addiction is because we have shoved down our feelings and emotions for so long that they rise back up to the top. We find that the only way to release them (besides exploding) is to "escape" or "numb out" into our addiction.

In recovery, we find that

to an addiction is because we have shoved down our feelings and emotions for so long that they rise back up to the top. We find that the only way

to release them (besides exploding) is to "escape" or "numb out" into our addiction. Gambling is a great way not to feel your feelings.

Be aware that as you progress in your recovery, you will have many feelings and emotions rising to the top. This is perfectly healthy; it shows that you are on the right track. Be careful not to overwhelm yourself with these feelings and emotions, for if you do, it may bring on a relapse.

This section will help you to identify your feelings and emotions in order to deal with them in a healthy way. Don't forget that one of your coping skills for this in the past was gambling. You take that coping skill (gambling) away, and you may feel everything unpleasant magnified by 10x. This can bring on anxiety, and can aggravate the stress caused from withdrawals.

We have basic feelings like:

Anger
Fear
Happiness
Resentment
Hope
Shame
Self-Pity
Guilt

We have complex feelings like:

Anxiety
Disappointment
Passion
Depression
Frustration
Impulsiveness
Insecurity



1. Identify your feelings:

When you feel something you are uncomfortable with, stop and breathe. Take a minute to ask yourself:

- “What am I feeling right now?”
- “Why am I feeling this way?”
- “What is the basic feeling, and what is the complex feeling?”
- “What emotion am I feeling at this time?”

2. Learn to express your feelings:

When you feel a strong emotion, it can become very “charged.” You need to stay in touch at this point so that you don’t express that emotion in a negative or harmful way, to yourself or to someone else.

Example: Basic—Anger Complex—Disappointment

You can learn how to communicate your anger or disappointed feelings by changing how you express them. If you currently express them in an aggressive way, what are the usual results? If you would express them in an assertive, but gentle way, would you get better results for you and others around you?

3. Learn to communicate your feelings:

- Speak in an assertive, but gentle way.**

Assertive means: To speak freely to others without hostility. Everyone has a right to have their opinion, and the right to share it without stepping on other people’s right to speak.

- Take responsibility for your feelings, for they are yours and no one else’s.
- No one can make you feel angry, that is always your choice.
- No one can make you feel any particular feeling, it is always your choice.

*Example: Use “I” statements: “I feel _____ when you _____.
I would prefer it if you _____.*

□ Identify your feeling first:

*“I feel angry and disappointed when you don’t ask my opinion.
I would prefer it if you asked for my input on family matters.”*

(We will learn more about relationships and communication later in the book.)

Another way to deal with your feelings and emotions is to tap into your self-talk. Is it positive or negative for the situation? If it is negative, your feelings and emotions may build to a very uncomfortable “boiling point,” and you may react more negatively than if you had used positive self-talk.

Example:

• **Negative:** *“I am so angry right now that I need to go gamble, and just get away from it all.”*

• **Positive:** *“I am feeling angry right now. Why am I feeling this way? I will wait until the feeling passes, and explore what is going on within me, and deal with my emotions in a positive way.”*

Circle the feeling words you have felt most often before gambling out of control:

Feeling Words

encouraged	skeptical	distrustful	afraid
envious	unhappy	contented	sorry
fearful	depressed	resentful	unbelieving
humble	immobilized	wishy-washy	loving
intrigued	isolated	earnest	playful
relaxed	melancholy	irritated	suspicious
torn	paralyzed	tender	apprehensive
excited	distressed	heavy-hearted	satisfied
anxious	terrified	jealous	evasive
bitter	loyal	determined	curious
impulsive	confused	flat	worthless
worried	lonely	excited	generous
sympathetic	disappointed	stretched	empty
tired	impatient	alive	pressured
scared	aggressive	proud	useless
lethargic	regretful	relieved	sad
guilty	angry	fearful	happy
hopeful	ashamed	self-pitying	serene
obstinate	exhausted	indifferent	bored
grateful	moody	spirited	frustrated

Put an X next to the words that best describe your feelings after gambling out of control.

List four words that best describe your feelings before gambling out of control.

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

List four words that best describe your feelings after gambling out of control.

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

How were your feelings before you developed the gambling problem different from what they are now?

Why?

Explain a time when you felt hopeful:

Explain a time when you felt guilty:

Explain a time when you felt angry:

Explain a time when you felt sad:

Explain a time when you felt resentful:

Explain a time when you felt happy:

As I said before, repressing one's feelings can cause an emotional overreaction, both physically and emotionally, and can lead to a relapse. Here is an exercise to help you explore your feelings further:

Feelings That are Hard for Me to Share	Feelings I Have no Problem Sharing

What is the hardest feeling for you to share? _____

What happens when you share this feeling? _____

Physical reactions? _____

Emotional reactions? _____

What are the barriers you face to sharing this feeling? _____

What do you think is the worst thing that would happen as a result of you sharing this feeling with someone you trust?

I am aware of my changing moods, and make allowances for them.



Chapter 21

Explore the Real You

Next, I want you to find out who you think you are. Crazy question, huh?

This worksheet is based on a book called *Looking Out/Looking In* by Ron Adler and Neil Towne. Here are some descriptive words for you to choose from to explore who you are. Remember that you have some good characteristics, and they are still there, you just need to find them again. This worksheet can tell a lot about what you think about yourself before gambling, after gambling, and how others see you.

As you read through this list, place a checkmark next to the ones that you feel describe you. Then put a star next to the one you feel best describes you.

accommodating	creative	hopeful	radical
aggressive	curious	humble	reasonable
aloof	cute	humorous	reckless
angry	cynical	hyperactive	religious
apathetic	deliberate	resentful	restrained
argumentative	arrogant	demonstrative	inconsiderate
articulate	diligent	industrious	artistic
disciplined	insensitive	sarcastic	assertive
dishonest	intelligent	self-controlled	athletic
dominating	intense	attentive	introverted
dynamic	selfish	attractive	sensitive
average	eclectic	kind	serious
effective	short	bad	efficient
lean	shy	beautiful	empathetic
lively	simple	bitter	enchanting
loving	skeptical	bold	energetic
loyal	smart	brash	engaging
sober	bright	enthusiastic	mediocre
spirited	bubbly	evil	muscular
stable	exciting	mystical	stiff
candid	exuberant	strong	careful
natural	successful	cautious	fair
nice	suspicious	charismatic	faithful
cheerful	fashionable	opinionated	talkative
chunky	fat	optimistic	tall
colorful	flirty	organized	thoughtful
combative	forgiving	outgoing	timid

comfortable	friendly	tired	committed
frugal	patient	trustworthy	competent
funny	peaceful	complacent	pessimistic
unattractive	complex	generous	petite
unhappy	confident	gentle	playful
unselfish	conscientious	good	poor
considerate	greedy	practical	vague
controlling	gregarious	pretty	conventional
cool	prideful	warm	handsome
productive	weak	cooperative	happy
wise	coordinated	hard-working	quarrelsome
crazy	honest	quiet	rich

Let's start with who do you think you are? List 12 words from above that you feel best describe who you are.

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 11. _____ | 12. _____ |

Now, let's compare words that describe who you were before you started gambling out of control to words you think describe you now.

Before Gambling	After Gambling
<i>Example: Reasonable</i>	<i>Argumentative</i>

Now, if you are ready to do some real work with yourself, ask someone else to pick out words that they feel describe you best. This is very difficult to do because it may make you feel vulnerable and open to harsh criticism. You may be pleasantly surprised; you may find that others do not perceive you as you might think they do. You are so used to beating your self up that you start believing your negative self-talk.

If you choose to do this exercise (good for you), sit and listen to every word they tell you without interrupting them. This is also very hard to do. It is difficult for most people to accept a compliment; we often want to give some excuse as to why we are not what others are saying we are. **STOP!** Just accept the words, digest them and believe them to be true. It would be disrespectful if you did not allow others to have their own opinions. This is tolerance, and caring from your core values.

Chapter 22

Who are You?



Part one:

Self-Worth

In addiction, when you lose connection with your values and beliefs, you begin behaving in ways that go against these principles, as well as “who you are,” and you can lose your self-esteem and self-worth.

Self-worth comes from the way that you treat yourself. It comes when your behavior matches your values and beliefs. If your gambling has gotten out of control and is interfering in many areas of your life, and if you are interacting with others in a negative way and you didn't used to act like that, it doesn't feel good.

In order to have self-worth, you must feel good about yourself. There is a lot

failing to follow your beliefs and value systems. This, in

turn, can cause depression, which can cause a return to gambling. Sometimes we can't tell which came first: depression or gambling... gambling or depression.

Self-worth comes from the way that you treat yourself. It comes when your behavior matches your values and beliefs.

When your behavior matches your values, it creates self-worth

When your behavior does not match your values, it causes shame.

Numerous problem gamblers have told me that they could never have imagined that they could lie, cheat, or steal, before. They wonder “How did this happen to me?” It takes time to get over the shock in order to look at how we got there. How did something so socially acceptable actually change the type of person I am?

Here are some ideas to help start getting your self-worth back again:

1. Take better care of your body

I am sure that, with all the stress caused by the problem gambling, you have not taken care of yourself. This means that you should eat right, sleep well, and exercise. As you get your body to feel better, so will your self-worth. I would take a guess that about 80%

of the human race does not like to exercise. It seems so overwhelming, and it hurts! Don't start big... start with some stretches in a quiet space, and then go for a walk to experience nature. Have you been outside in awhile?—Just a little at a time. Give it two weeks, and you will start feeling better about yourself. If you miss a day, so what?... start again tomorrow!

2. Have realistic expectations for yourself

Rome wasn't built in a day. Gambling is VERY impulsive, and gamblers often find that they need instant gratification (all addictions are that way). If you set your goals too high, you cannot succeed, and you will lose what self-worth you have rebuilt. Start small.

3. Find what your values are

Do the value exercise in chapter 19 of this book so that you know where to start. This can be the first building block for you to increase your sense of self-worth.

4. Be honest with someone

It is impossible to feel good about yourself if you continue to lie and have secrets. Find someone you trust to share your secrets with. This is where group work helps; there is no judgment in a therapy or GA group. Everyone is there for the same reason... you are not alone.

*What lies behind us and lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.
(Ralph Waldo Emerson)*

Part Two:

Self-Esteem

Now that you understand that self-worth is a reflection of how you treat yourself, self-esteem reflects how you *feel* about yourself. It defines how you allow yourself a sense of self-worth, and how accepting you are of your own feelings.

There are three ways to look at the self:

- Self-Ideal – Who we would like to be or become.**

- Self-Image – The way we see ourselves or our behavior.**

- Self-Esteem – How we feel about ourselves, our abilities, and our self-worth.**

Our self-esteem begins to be created after birth; it is created by our environment, and what we believe others say is true of us. Let me make that clearer. How we are raised can shape us to have a high self-esteem or a low self-esteem. Here are some possible causes of low self-esteem.

Low self-esteem:

Overly critical parents

Parental over-protectiveness

Abusive household; Physical, Sexual, Emotional, Verbal abuse.

Addiction; alcohol or drug abuse; Significant

loss Parental Neglect

Parental Rejection

Do any of these sound familiar to you? If we are told that we are worthless as a child growing up, we believe that we are worthless, and then this becomes one of our core beliefs. Is this a true belief? Was it based on a true statement that we were told? Only you can decide if this is a true belief for you, or not. If we grew up in a household that was not a positive, nurturing influence, we may continue in our lives in a negative, self-defeating way.

Negative self-talk is a self-defeating behavior, and addiction is a self-defeating behavior. If you feel that you are not worthy, or if you feel unworthy, you can't have any self-respect for your body or self.

Negative self-talk is a self-defeating behavior, and addiction is a self-defeating behavior. If you feel that you are not

have any self-respect for your body or self.

We all have "tapes" that play through our heads. Many of these come from what we believed to be true about ourselves as a child, tapes like "I am fat," "I won't grow up to be anything." These tapes often play over and over in our head, and now shape our adult lives with this negative self-talk that we learned as a child.

When you are starting to hear one of these negative tapes running, use the "Stop" process, and turn it into something positive. A positive affirmation will help stop the negative tape. After some practice of doing this over and over, you will see a change in your thoughts, as well as how you see yourself as a person.

Let's work through the following exercise:

Example: "I am worthless"

STOP and Reframe

"That is not true for me anymore. I have changed, I go to work everyday, and I take care of my animals."

This can be anything you find yourself saying negatively about yourself. What are some of yours? How can you change or reframe them? Reframing means to reword what is said in another way. In this case in a more positive way.

Negative Self-Talk	Positive Affirmation (Reframing)

PRACTICE...PRACTICE...PRACTICE

Prepare for setbacks, for when you try something once and it doesn't work, it doesn't mean you are a failure. There is no such thing as failing. It is only a setback; you sit back, regroup, and search for another approach that may work in that situation. If that doesn't work either, try something else until you succeed. It may be helpful to ask for help—someone may have a different perspective, or may have experienced the same setback, but found a workable solution.

"You never fail until you stop trying"
(Florence Griffin Joyner)

Part Three:

Self-Image



The Mask, or “Poker Face”

The last thought of self I want you to explore is something I will call “The Mask.” This is what we all portray to others around us.

It has to do with Self-Image which is about:

- a. What I want others to see.
- b. How I want to see myself.

This is the “Bluff” or “Poker Face” that we use to conceal “The Hand,” or who we think we are.

Many of us believe that we are not worthy humans, and we may feel stupid, unlovable, weak, and defective in some way. The image we put out there, “The Mask,” is just a fantasy, much like our life in gambling. Gambling is a fan-

fantasy makes us feel big, important, and loved, when we do win. It is the fantasy of being someone other than who we are or the fantasy to make our reality different.

Gambling is a fantasy of the thoughts of winning. This fantasy makes us feel

big, important, and loved, when we do win. It is the fantasy of being someone other than who we are or the fantasy to make our reality different.

We can also call this our “poker face,” or “bluff,” in gambling terms. I am sure that everyone will understand that example! This feeling is only temporary, because after we lose, we have to put up our mask again, because we really feel bad inside.

What is it behind the mask that we can’t show the world? That we aren’t perfect? Who is? That we compare ourselves to others? How do you know they don’t have a mask up, too? It is good to be a genuine person (without hurting others), and to be true to ourselves, for we all have our strengths and weaknesses. Find your strengths, and nurture them to grow until you can put the mask down.

To help change your negative tapes, refer to the Tools section of this book, and use the tool to write positive affirmations (statements) about yourself, and tape them to the wall, refrigerator, or bathroom mirror. Reading these affirmations everyday will help the change come quicker.

How Do You Feel About Your Gambling Today?

(AADAC 1996)

You will be asked this question throughout the recovery process and this book. This will help you to stay in touch with your feelings. By checking in with yourself regularly, the thoughts and feelings that lead to relapse will not hit you blindly.

Check the box that most closely states how you feel today.

- Denial/Minimizing**—“It’s not that bad, what’s the big deal?”
- Bargaining**—“I’ll only go two times a week,” or “I will pay you back.”
- Hope**—Genuine hopefulness: “I hope to win this time.” Or “I hope to quit this time.”
- Sadness**—Reality sets in: “I have made some bad choices.” “I have hurt others.”
- Guilt/Shame**—“How could I have let myself do this again? I even stole money.”
- Anger**—General or specific, at others, at yourself, or at the gambling itself.
- Acceptance**—“I need help, I can’t do this myself,” or “I can’t stop myself.”
- Optimism**—“I think I can quit, I am feeling more confident everyday, I feel good.”
- Contentment**—“There are other things to do besides gambling, I can fight this.”

After completing this small checklist, look back at the last time you filled it out. (Refer to page 68)

What is different?

Why do you think it is different?

Do you notice any patterns in your answers?

When you're the victim of the behavior, it is black and white; when you're the perpetrator, there are a million shades of gray. (Dr. Laura Schlesinger)



Chapter 23

Family

When you think of your family, it may be of your mother and father and siblings, or it may be of your husband or wife, and children. You can refer to both of these types of families if they both apply. When you think of family and addiction, the addict is not the only one that needs help. Any family unit is permanently changed when an addiction enters the house. The family at first doesn't understand what is happening, because of the secret world of the addict. They soon find themselves part of keeping the secret as well. They also may keep their opinions to themselves because they don't want to upset the addict and start a fight.

Family members may become enablers to the addict, knowingly or unknowingly, to keep the family going, and together. This could be part of the family system of denial. After awhile, this new way of living becomes "normal" and comfort-

When you think of family and addiction, the addict is not the only one that needs help. Any family unit is permanently changed when an addiction enters the house.

able. The thought of change and actually going through the change of recovery is very difficult for all involved. Change is not just about the gambler, it

is about everyone in the family unit. It can be more painful at first for everyone involved, until you have time to work through many issues that have been effected by the addictive behavior.

Trust is the biggest issue to work on in the recovery process. The family members have heard the gambler (addict) make so many promises that are broken that the trust is gone. Results will be seen by change in behavior, not with words and promises. Full recovery doesn't happen overnight. It is difficult for the gambler (addict) to wait as long as it takes for the family to accept change. The gambler feels that, since he has decided to quit, why can't everyone just understand that, and back off? It doesn't work that way. Rebuilding trust may take months or years, or it may never happen, because the trust may have been broken too many times.

One of the most influential actions you can take for your children is to be honest about your problem (under reasonable conditions), and to be a good role model. When a child sees a parent being honest, taking responsibility, and working hard to quit an addiction, they will have higher self-esteem, more respect for you, and a "can do" attitude. This will help them if they find themselves with a similar problem later on down the road.

Children grow up according to what feels normal to them. This means that, if gambling had been a tradition growing up together as a family unit, it will be carried on in future generations. If there is a predisposition or tendency for addiction in the family biologically, that will also carry on in future generations.

Most gambling treatment agencies, and any counselor or therapist, can help with recovery for the family members; or, look for a GamAnon in your area.

1. List 10 ways your gambling behavior has harmed your family:

Let's talk about family roles in a dysfunctional family unit. There are generally six roles family members may assume just for their own survival. These roles become who we are, and they shape our personality. I think that when you explore these roles, and if you have been involved in a dysfunctional family that has an addicted member, you will be able to identify these roles.

1. Person with Addiction Problems:

In this case, we are talking about any addiction, whether it be gambling, alcoholism, drug abuse, sex, overeating, etc. These types of addicts can show certain behaviors, like being: aggressive, secretive, unaccountable, non-responsive, charming, irresponsible, blaming, and grandiose. They have low self-worth. Gamblers especially have high ego and low self-esteem, hence the grandiosity. They often feel inferior on the inside, but act like a big shot on the outside. They feel a lot of shame, guilt, and worthlessness. They need to be loved, accepted, confronted, and supported.

2. The Enabler:

The enabler may feel very responsible, and may even act "the Martyr." He or she may feel powerless, but will do anything to smooth things out with the addict. They are fragile and manipulative because they have to be. They are angry and tired, and wonder if it is their fault, or if they are responsible for the way the addict is behaving. They need support, to be heard, to receive positive self-care, and achieve a positive confrontation, to stop enabling the addict.

3. The Hero:

Independent, helpful, successful, runs the family, seeks approval of the rest of the family. They will be the ones to excel at anything they do, for acceptance and a feeling of normalcy in the family. This distracts from the problems. They really feel inadequate, and that they can't do anything "good enough," so they try harder. They may need to take risks just to "feel something."

4. The Scapegoat:

This is the one in the family who is picked out to get into trouble, and so they will. Negative attention is still attention. They act out, are defiant, sullen, blaming, and may use drugs and alcohol, or smoke tobacco. They are lonely, they don't feel a part of the family unit, and are hurt at not being heard. They need to be listened to, accepted for the good things they do, and confronted and supported positively.

5. The Lost Child:

These folks are just how it sounds. They are the quiet ones out there alone. They have an excellent imagination, and don't need anyone else to interact with. They are withdrawn from others, and no one notices them. They have a lot of anger, and feel very lonely, even though they seem to do well alone. They need to be invited in to interact with others, and to be given encouragement and compliments.

6. The Mascot:

This is the "clown" of the family. They are the ones who try to distract all the negativity with their humor or "acting out." They are a good distraction for the dysfunctional family. They fear not belonging to the family unit or to any other groups. By acting the clown, they are invited into these groups, even at their own expense. They need to be included and taken seriously.

These roles can apply to anyone in the family, and can change as time and the effects of the dysfunction change. Each family member takes on these roles in order to lessen stress for themselves and for the family unit. You will find as you enter into recovery that it may not be easy for others to change with you. In fact, they may sabotage you unknowingly, because the way they and the family have been living has become comfortable to them. Change is uncomfortable, and the relationships may get worse before they get better, depending on the level of dysfunction.

Take a look at your family unit:

If there was addiction and family dysfunction in your life while growing up, let's explore that. If not, let's explore your family currently, say, your partner and children.

1. Who is the Addicted person? How did that person interact with the family?

2. Who is the Enabler? How did that person interact with the family and addict?

3. Who is the Hero? How did that person interact with the family and addict?

4. Who is the Scapegoat? How did that person interact with the family and addict?

5. Who is the lost Child? How did that person interact with the family and addict?

6. Who is the Mascot? How did that person interact with the family and addict?

Enabling

We need to explore enabling, because every addict has one in their life. An enabler is someone who shields the addict from feeling, or having to deal with, the negative consequences that result from their addictive behavior. The enabler will lie to him/herself, the addict and others, about the severity of the problem, which minimizes the problem behavior. The enabler works very hard to make sure the family and the gambler look good.

The enabler may be in collusion with the gambler. This means that they may be just as involved in the negative behavior by gambling with them. If they gamble together they may think; "it must not be that bad," or they think that they can keep control of the gambler. Or, it could be that the enabler has an addiction to some-

thing else, like alcohol, and so they will cover for each other. If they say anything, they will have to change their behavior also.

The enablers may be in denial themselves; they may

An enabler is someone who shields the addict from feeling, or having to deal with, the negative consequences that result from their addictive behavior. The enabler will lie to him/herself, the addict and others, about the severity of the problem...

use a lot of the same denial or defense mechanisms that the gambler does, to protect themselves from the horrible truth. Because the enabler continues to be blamed, and possibly take verbal or physical abuse from the addict, they may lose *their own* self-respect and self-worth.

Living in a world of crises everyday, when you don't know in what condition the gambler will walk in the door, is difficult and very stressful, so the family cannot make any plans, and they become isolated and scared. There are always the ups and downs, things may get bad, and then, afterwards, there is always the promise and hope of things getting better. It is like living on a rollercoaster.

The enabler really starts to believe that he/she is the one responsible for the behavior of the gambler. So that person may try to change him/herself, or the environment around them, to please the gambler, but he or she will always fail, because it is up to the gambler to make the changes. Often, both the addict and enabler agree that the addiction is the enabler's fault. The enabler thinks "*maybe I could have done something different to help him/her.*" The enabler will continually bail the gambler out to keep him/her out of hot water, and to keep the gambler from becoming angry. When this is unsuccessful because the gambler doesn't quit gambling, the gambler may withdraw from the relationship and life. His/her life becomes more and more unbearable, and they may feel as if there is no way out.

The best thing the gambler can do is to continue to work his or her program, and

improve communication with his or her family.

I nurture my soul by spending time with people who support and encourage me.

Chapter 24



Relationships

We have many different types of relationships in our lives, both healthy and unhealthy. Part of the negative consequences of our addiction is that we harm, or permanently break, otherwise healthy relationships. This occurs because we have lied, stolen, and broken promises, and we have not been accountable or reliable in a way we should have been.

For a healthy relationship, it takes honesty, trust, openness, and mutual respect. If you have come to the point in your gambling that you are reading this book, you may already have seen some of your relationships crumbling.

Relationships come in all forms: work, family, friends, and acquaintances; all of these will be touched by the problem gambling in some way. How can they not change when we change ourselves because of the gambling?

1. *What are some of your important relationships?*

a. _____ c. _____

b. _____ d. _____

2. *Are you trustworthy in your relationships? Why or why not?*

3. *Are you honest in your relationships? Why or why not?*

4. *Are you respectful in your relationships? Why or why not?*

5. *Are you open in your relationships? Why or why not?*

6. *Which relationships have been hurt by your gambling?*

7. *How can you begin to mend these relationships?*

A few nice words or a compliment can go along way to help restore and rebuild a damaged relationship. Start out once a week by telling your partner something nice, or compliment them. If you have been involved in a negative relationship, this may be difficult at first, but it will become easier with time.

Make a list of the things that you liked about your partner when you first met them. Have them do the same, and exchange them. You don't need to discuss these lists right away; you can take your time to discuss them. Work on one of these at a time, within yourself, and see how you feel.

8. *What are you willing to do to improve the relationship?*

9. *What have people told you about how you could communicate better to improve your relationships with them?*

10. *What do you think you could change in order to improve your relationships?*

*One of the greatest gifts to others is mindful communication,
speaking and listening with patience and love.*

Chapter 25

Communication

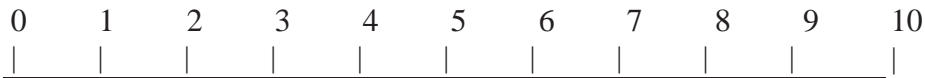


One reason that our relationships suffer is that we may lack good communication skills. We may never have learned how to communicate in an effective way, or we may have isolated ourselves or become angry, negative and aggressive, because of the gambling.

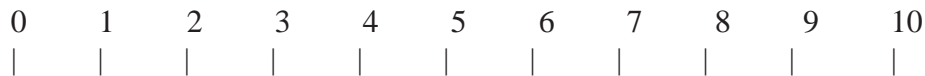
In this section, we will learn the different ways of expressing ourselves, and the basics to communication, to see how complex it really is. Let's take a look at how you are communicating right now.

Circle on a scale of 0-10:

1. How well do you think you have been communicating in your life?



2. How well do you think you have been communicating since your gambling got out of control?



There are four ways to express yourself:

1. In a Passive way:

Passivity—*Not being able to speak or express your needs, wants, feelings, and ideas. Allowing someone else to speak for you.*

When you communicate in a passive way, you may sound apologetic, weak, and unsure of yourself. You may not say what you really need, and you can be hurt by this. Not being direct in what you want to say may cause others to decide for you. Passive people end up feeling disappointed in themselves afterwards, and it may show in anger or passive/aggressive behavior.

2. In a **Passive/Aggressive** way:

This is a combination of passive and aggressive:

Passive/Aggressivity manifests when we don't ask for what we need, get angry because we didn't get what we needed, and then have a negative reaction because of it. This is like hurting someone indirectly without their knowing it. This can be hurtful, dishonest, and confusing to others. This will result in negative communication, because nothing will be resolved in this manner—it only brings negativity to the relationship.

3. In an **Aggressive** way:

Aggressive is speaking or expressing your ideas, needs, and feelings, at the expense of others' feeling, and needs.

Aggression can be very intimidating to others. It can dominate, humiliate, and put down others, none of which feel good. This type of communication is more about power and control than about sharing ideas. This is a very negative way to communicate. You may get what you want in the moment, but you will lose the relationship in the end.

4. In an **Assertive** way:

Assertive is speaking or expressing your ideas, needs, and feelings, while standing up for your rights. We do this without stepping on anyone else's feelings or rights.

This is the healthiest way to communicate with others. It is direct, honest, and it opens up the dialogue for others to join in a positive way. This makes us feel better about ourselves, and will build our sense of self-confidence and self-worth.

(We will talk more about assertive behavior later in the book)

Communication has three parts:

1. **Speaking**
2. **Active Listening**
3. **Body Language**

Each one of these parts is equally important for successful communication.

1. Speak directly and firmly with self-confidence, and with the confidence that you have the right to speak just as anyone else does. What you have to say is important. If it is important enough for you to say, it is important enough for the receiver to hear. We will explore the right and wrong ways to speak in this section.

Explain **speaking** in:

a. A passive way _____

b. An aggressive way _____

c. An assertive way _____

2.Listen actively!: This means to listen to everything that people have to say before you start thinking of your response. You miss what they have to say if you are busy preparing how to respond while they are talking.

A good listener maintains eye contact, leans forward, or stands straight in front of the speaker. Give them your full attention; if you don't understand something said, you can ask open-ended questions to clarify it for you. If you don't do this, the communication will fail, and at the end of the conversation it is important to summarize what has been said, so you need to listen.

Explain **active listening** in:

a. A passive way _____

b. An aggressive way _____

c. An assertive way _____

3.Be aware of your body language; your body language includes: eye contact, posture, tone of voice, and how you hold your hands.

Explain your **body language** in:

a. A passive way _____

b. An aggressive way _____

c. An assertive way _____

I am a deliberate listener, pausing to reflect before responding.

Some Do's and Don'ts in your communication:

DO

Use proper eye contact
Use "I" statements
Watch the "space" between you
Use empathy
(*Understanding*)
Pay attention
Be aware of surroundings
Be aware of timing and place
Paraphrase
Ask follow-up questions
Ask what they want
Actively Listen
Be honest
Be attentive
Use appropriate self-disclosure

DON'T

Assume anything
Use "You" statements
Threaten
Use communication killers
(*Never – Always*)
Generalize
Name calling
Intimidation
Power/Control
Cut anyone off
Interrupt
Give untimely advice
Use "if/then" Statements (*Ultimatums*)
Ask why
Use negative tone of voice

Beware:
90% of communication is non-verbal

Communication Killers:

- Arguing
- Moralizing
- Saying "You never"
- Saying "You always"
- Order
- Criticize
- Judge
- Threaten

In communication, never assume what the person is saying to you. Giving and receiving criticism should be a healthy way of helping another person to examine themselves and what they are doing. We may not want to hear criticism, but we need to hear it and look at it before accepting or rejecting it.

Think about timing and place: is this a good time for either party to be talking about the issue? Is it the right place? If not, stop the communication until you can get to a time and place that will most enhance the exchange.

Use “I” statements instead of “You” statements.

“I feel _____ when you _____. I would prefer if you _____.”

Healthy “You” statements:

“When you _____ (describe the situation objectively (not blaming)) _____ the effects are _____ (specific consequences) _____ I feel _____ I would prefer _____.”

Saying “NO”:

- a. Decide if the request is reasonable for you. Be assertive, and decide for yourself.
- b. If you hesitate, listen—you may need time to decide if the request is all right for you, or not.
- c. If you can’t make your decision at that time, you have the right to tell people you need more time.
- d. If you decide you want to say no, it’s okay. It is your right to say no. Say it firmly and confidently.
- e. You don’t have to explain why you said no, but if you feel you want to, keep it brief and simple. Don’t give people the opportunity to change your mind.
- f. Don’t apologize, this may show weakness.

If you are not used to saying no, or uncomfortable when saying no, practice and use positive self-talk: say to yourself (in the moment) “I can say no, other people have the right, so I do, too.”

No man can think clearly when his fists are clenched. (George Jean Nathan)

Chapter 26

Anger

Anger is a natural emotion, and feeling angry is neither good or bad, *per se*. The emotion and feeling of anger may have many other types of emotions behind it, like:

Anger is how we react to a situation or feeling, and it is our choice how we handle it.

Fear Guilt Shame Disappointment
Frustration Hurt

assault which can be very scary. Anger is a normal part of the human emotions, but what is more important is how we deal with anger.

Anger is how we react to a situation or feeling, and it is our choice how we handle it. In this section, we will explore some reasons why we are angry, how anger affects us, those around us, and we will explore some tools to help you manage or control your anger in order to use it in a healthy manner.



ANGER IS NOT A FEELING, IT IS A BEHAVIOR

Some people lash out in anger as a tool. Some people don't know how to express their anger, so they stuff it down inside themselves until it gets to the point of spilling over in a very unhealthy way. We learn how to deal with anger initially in our family while growing up. Think about how you were raised. Was there a lot of yelling and screaming? Slamming of doors, verbal or physical threats? Or on the other hand, did you come from a family that never showed any anger, so you didn't learn how to deal with it in the proper, healthy way?

Addiction and anger work together from both of these sides. For those who use anger as a tool, it may be used to start a fight to allow them an excuse to go out and gamble, drink, or use. For those who don't know how to express their anger this can build until the exploding point that they need to escape.

When you get angry, how do you usually react?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stuff it? | <input type="checkbox"/> Get Violent? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scream and yell? | <input type="checkbox"/> Get Aggressive? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Throw things? | <input type="checkbox"/> Slam doors? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hit? | |

Anger released in a negative or harmful way can destroy relationships, lead to relapse, violence, arrest, and possible jail time. It can cloud your judgment so that you can't think clearly in the moment, which can lead to poor decision-making, and cause impulsive reactions.

Remember that it is your choice how to react to a situation, and only you can allow it to make you angry. The first step is to become aware of your feelings when you are angry.

Remember back to a time recently when you were angry:

What were you feeling? Example: *unfairly treated, frustrated*

What were your physical reactions to the feeling? Example: *shaking*

What were you thinking? Example: *"I wish they would just shut up."*

Anger can cause many physical problems:

Heart Problems

Colitis

High Blood pressure

Depression

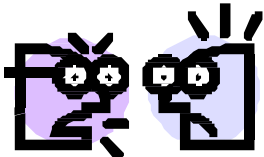
Addiction

It is possible to feel helpless, hopeless, and become depressed if you don't know how to release your anger in a healthy way.

**ANGER BLOCKS THE AWARENESS OF PAIN,
DISCHARGES UNCOMFORTABLE FEELINGS,
ERASES GUILT,
AND PLACES THE BLAME FOR PROBLEMS
ON OTHERS**

How to look at a situation with someone else who is angry:

- a. What is the problem?
- b. Whose problem is it?
- c. What are my feelings about it?
- d. What are the possible outcomes, actions, and reactions?
- e. What are the risks?
- f. Am I able to resolve the angry situation?



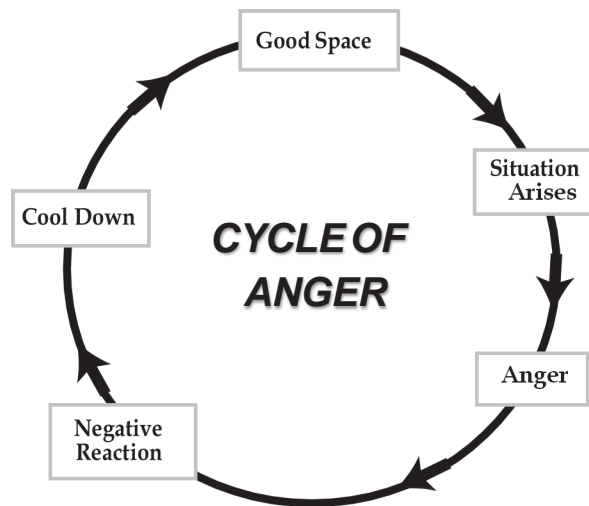
Think of a situation when you were dealing with someone who was angry. Here are some steps to consider in the process:

1. **Pay attention** to what is happening to you, both physically and emotionally.
2. **Analyze the situation** and determine if it is safe for you to stay there, or if you should leave.
3. **Take a deep breath.** This will calm the physical reaction that is starting to happen in your body. Stay calm, use a calm tone of voice, and use calm, objective responses.
4. **Be careful of eye-contact.** Use it if it is safe to do so—you want to seem attentive, but not aggressive, or challenging.
5. **Listen...** actively listen... and be patient. It may take the person some time to get to the real reason for the anger.
6. **Find the true source of the problem.**
7. **Ask non-threatening questions:** “What do they want, how can you help?”
8. **Decide on what action to take,** and stick with it.
9. **Sort through the issues,** find the facts versus their interpretation—What is the person saying about you? Is it true?
10. **Accept and acknowledge the truth,** and dismiss the untruths.
11. **Respond in a calm, unemotional, matter-of-fact way** to what you just heard.
12. **Come up with a resolution to the problem.**
13. **If you cannot resolve the situation then** because the situation is out of control, **set a concrete time when you can come back together** to come up with the resolution **and walk away cleanly from the situation** at that time.

Stop when:

- It is clear that no change will occur.*
- Either party is losing control.*
- The real issue of the anger is for control, not for solving anything.*

Now let's talk about our own anger, not someone else's. Anger can be thought of, or visualized, as a cycle:



You can be stuck in this cycle for an hour, a day, or a lifetime. It is your choice

You start your day feeling pretty good, then a situation arises that pushes your buttons, you feel the anger physically rise up in you, and as it intensifies in a negative way, *you react* in a negative way. Once you have exploded verbally or physically to the situation, you can then calm down. Sound familiar? Now let's break it down to find out how and when to break the cycle before it progresses to a negative reaction and you explode:

1. Situation Arises:

a. Think about what the situation is. Is it something verbal or non-verbal?

Verbal

- Words
- Tone of voice
- Insulting or Demeaning

Non-verbal

- Put on hold on phone
- Windshield hit by rock
- Something borrowed and not returned

b. Is it against you personally or not?

Personal

- Insulting words used against you from your boss.

Not Personal

- Windshield hit by rock

c. Feelings or Warning Signs:

Physical

- Shoulders tense
- Grit teeth

Emotional

- Demoralized, Frustrated
- Valueless, Challenged

This is the point where you make your choice, before you get angry. Make the choice *not to take it personally*.

Check in with yourself:

- “Why am I feeling this way?”
- “How much control do I have over the situation?”
- “How much power do I want to give the situation?”
- Are these old feelings from the past that have nothing to do with the current situation?

Stop, breathe, and think about the issue at hand. Step back until you calm down, and deal with the situation when you are not feeling so emotionally charged.

Now work through a time recently when you found yourself in this cycle:

a. Situation arises:

b. Verbal or non-verbal?

c. Personal or non-personal?

d. How are you feeling physically?

e. How are you feeling emotionally?

f. What tool can you use to stop the cycle before full-blown anger comes out?

If you are someone who has been angry at everything for a large part of your life, seek out help with anger management self-help or therapy, especially if there is domestic violence involved. It is never okay to physically

It is *never* okay to physically hurt someone because we choose to be angry about something.

hurt someone because we choose to be angry about something.

Here are a few questions to help you begin to explore your anger:

a. What do you believe happened to you in your life that was not fair?

b. Who are you angry with?

c. How do you show your anger?

d. Do you punish yourself?

e. Do you punish others in your life?

f. How was anger dealt with in your childhood?

CONSIDER THIS: COULD YOU BE ANGRY BECAUSE YOU ARE GRIEVING THE LOSS OF GAMBLING?

Chapter 27



Grief and Loss

Grieving is a natural process and a natural part of life. It is healthy to grieve any losses we have in our lives, no matter how big or small, or what anyone else thinks. Only we can know when, how, and for how long we should grieve something.

This book can only touch on the subject of grief for you; therefore, if after you have finished this section, and it has brought up losses that might overwhelm you to deal with on your own, please seek help from someone, whether a friend or family member, or a fellow GA member or counselor. Some of us have stuffed our losses down deep for so long, afraid to feel them, that once we open ourselves up to feeling them, we may feel emotionally overwhelmed, even depressed, and unfortunately, in some tragic cases, suicidal. Do not remain isolated in your grief, but rather, seek a sympathetic ear; and express your feelings, no matter how much it may hurt; healing begins with sharing and openness.

We will explore the stages of grieving, the difference between grief and depression, and what grief and loss have to do with gambling or addictions in general.

Many people with addictions may have unresolved grief that may come from many different causes in our life; the death of a loved one is obviously a foremost cause of grief and loss for anybody, but here are several other causes:

Loss of a job

Retirement

Divorce

Empty nest (Children leaving home)

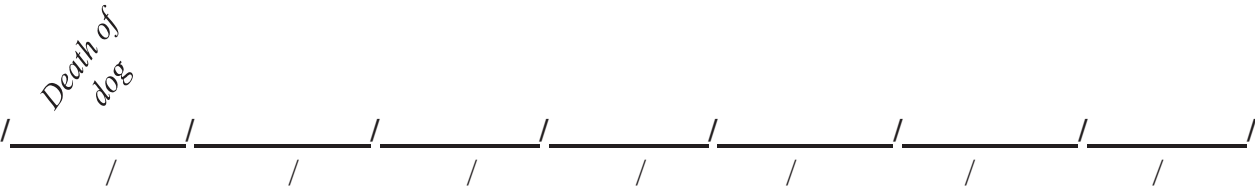
Neglect or abuse

Loss of youth

Death of Pet

Any loss is a significant change for us, and if dealt with in the right way at the right time, it can actually have a positive effect on our lives. It may teach us something about ourselves, life, nature, or something about what or who we lost. Loss and the grief associated with it create an opportunity to grow. Addiction grows when we don't deal with the losses near the time they happen. Some losses occurred in childhood, and still need to be grieved as an adult.

Take a moment to chart all of the significant losses in your life:



The difference between mourning and depression:

Mourning: is how you deal with loss in a healthy way. There is a beginning and an end to it. You will know when you have made it to the other side because you will feel a sense of release, understanding, and calm. You no longer feel the symptoms of grief. Maybe you have found a new perspective on life, or on the event itself.

Depression: can feel like mourning, and it can follow mourning; but if it continues for more than two weeks, maybe you should find some help through your family doctor and counseling. The difference between mourning and depression is that in depression you are stuck in the sad feelings and other symptoms, whereas mourning is more natural, healthy, and short-lived. Depression can last years, or a lifetime, but can be treated successfully.

Symptoms of depression:		
Loss of appetite	Can't sleep	Sleep too much
Irritability	Can't concentrate	Loss of interest in life
Crying	Forgetfulness	Restlessness
Feeling emotionally "flat"	Suicidal Thoughts	Escape into Addiction
Weight loss	Anger	

Many people don't like to cry. Some have learned in their childhood that it is shameful to cry. Some are afraid that if they were to start, they would never stop. Think about a time that you have seen anyone cry, maybe an adult, or better yet, a child. The crying begins, gets more intense, and then stops. There is a huge sense of relief afterwards, both physically and emotionally. Crying is said to have a spiritual and soulful cleansing.

Crying may be overwhelming in the beginning of the grieving process, especially right after a serious loss, but you will usually find that it ceases eventually. However, grief may just sneak up on you unexpectedly, and it *can* continue for months or years.

Grief is an ongoing process, with no particular time limit, but it can well become a part of the mourner's identity, or who they are. It can give one new eyes with which to view one's life, and one's role in the world. Feeling and resolving grief is a big part of the search for the meaning of life, throughout all kinds of losses, including deaths of near and dear ones.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, who worked with dying patients and wrote a book on the grieving process, found these stages within the grieving process:

- Denial and Isolation
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

You may feel these as well:

- Shock
- Panic
- Tears
- Depression
- Guilt
- Sickness

Think about the graph you did in the beginning of this section, and then pick one of those losses that you have not worked through yet.

• Write a letter to it. Write it as a:

Good-bye letter

Sharing your anger letter

I miss you letter

What I wish I had said letter

You can write whatever you want to, but be sure to express all of your feelings, and when you are done, you can save it, or burn it, or tie it to a balloon and let it float away. These are all ways of "Letting Go."

Now write a good-bye letter to gambling. Write in it what it was like for you, what it did for you, how it hurt you, etc. Many who do this say that when they re-read it, it sounds like they had had a love affair. If this is the case, you can understand why you would grieve the loss of the relationship with gambling. Was it like that for you? This is a letter that you may want to keep, so that you can use it as a tool to avoid gambling in the future, by re-reading it out loud to yourself. Share it with a loved one if you feel comfortable in doing so.



Write it here:

I believe in the ability to make my own life. There is nothing I cannot do.

Chapter 28



Assertive Behavior

As human beings, we have certain basic rights. However, maybe we were never taught them, or we have through the years forgotten what they were. Assertive behavior means that you have the right as much as anyone else to these:

Personal Bill of Rights

(From The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook)

1. I have the right to ask for what I want.
2. I have the right to say no to requests or demands I can't meet.
3. I have the right to express all of my feelings, positive or negative.
4. I have the right to change my mind.
5. I have the right to make mistakes and not have to be perfect.
6. I have the right to follow my own values and standards.
7. I have the right to say no to anything when I feel I am not ready, it is unsafe, or it violates my values.
8. I have the right to determine my own priorities.
9. I have the right to not to be responsible for others' behavior, actions, feelings, or problems.
10. I have the right to expect honesty from others.
11. I have the right to be angry at someone I love.
12. I have the right to be uniquely myself.
13. I have the right to feel scared and say "I'm afraid."

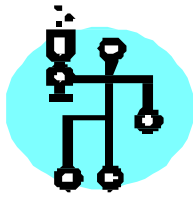
14. I have the right to say "I don't know."
15. I have the right to not to give excuses or reasons for my behavior.
16. I have the right to make decisions based on my feelings.
17. I have the right to my own needs for personal space and time.
18. I have the right to be playful and frivolous.
19. I have the right to be healthier than those around me.
20. I have the right to be in a non-abusive environment.
21. I have the right to make friends and be comfortable around people.
22. I have the right to change and grow.
23. I have the right to have my needs and wants respected by others.
24. I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
25. I have the right to be happy.

Take this whole list and post it for yourself. Or just take parts and write them on 3"x5" cards and post around your house, in your car, and at work. If you read through the list daily, you will eventually learn to believe and accept it as your truth.



Take a moment to write about your day:

*I control my indulgences, from overspending to gambling,
because I am in control of my life.*



Chapter 29

Cross-Addiction



One of my clients shared with me that they always drank beer when they gambled. They thought for sure that they couldn't gamble without a beer in their hand. Another told me that they smoked like a chimney while gambling—they said that it was a lot more than they normally smoked throughout the day. Still another client, after being in treatment for a couple of months, and abstinent, admitted that he was drinking more than he ever had. He decided that, after learning about cross-addiction, he had better ask for help with his drinking before it got as far out of control as his gambling had been.

There are two types of cross-addiction:

- a. Having a drug or alcohol dependence while having a gambling problem.
- b. Starting a new dependence after quitting gambling.

I have found many gambling addicts enter treatment for gambling after quitting drinking or abusing drugs for many years. One gentleman said, "I have been in recovery from drugs and alcohol for twenty years. I have been a part of AA for all of that time. I had no idea that I had switched one addiction for another."

This "Switching" one addiction for another is very common. This happens when you stop one addiction and pick up another. Many times this happens because we think we have control of ourselves after quitting something.

This "Switching" one addiction for another is very common. This happens when you stop one addiction and pick up another. Many times this happens because we think we have control of ourselves after quitting something. Some addicts quit working the program of recovery, some didn't even know that cross-addiction existed, and some didn't understand that once you have been addicted to one thing, you are more prone to become addicted to other things!!! Or maybe, they didn't go deep enough in their therapy to take care of some serious issues, and they are still trying to escape, or run, from them. Everyone needs to have this information in order to protect themselves from another addiction sneaking up on them.

Studied statistics range, but generally speaking, approximately 5% of the U.S. population have a gambling problem. Of those already in chemical dependency treatment, my research has shown that 34% of gamblers also had a dual-diagnosis, or cross-addiction

with drug and alcohol abuse. Generally, studies have shown that 10% to 50% of gamblers studied are dually-diagnosed, or cross-addicted.

Interesting enough is the fact that those already having drug and/or alcohol abuse or dependence have a higher rate of “problem gambling.” Those who have had a problem with gambling first don’t pick up a dual-addiction at the same time, as much as the other way around. I believe that that is because gamblers don’t want to spend their money on anything else other than gambling. You be the judge... Is that true for you?

Do you feel that you may have a drug or alcohol problem?

How would you know it if you did?

How often do you drink in one week? _____

How often do you drink in a month? _____

How many drinks do you have when you do drink? _____

Do you feel intoxicated when you do drink? _____

Here is some information that may help you decide if you have a problem with alcohol:

Number of Drinks	Blood Alcohol Level (gm/dL)
2	.02
3	.05
4	Moststates - .08 -Legal limit
5	.11
6	.14
7	.17
8	.20

This is measured as 1.5 oz. of 86 proof liquor = a 5 oz. glass of wine = one 12 oz. beer. This takes two hours after drinking to eliminate, per drink. The number of drinks above refers to when the alcohol is consumed in a four-hour time period.



General Model of Addiction

Addiction is any chronic, habitual behavior that interferes with one’s ability to function normally.

This list can refer to any self-destructive behaviors, such as: problem gambling, overeating, sex addiction, drug abuse, alcoholism, uncontrolled spending, smoking, sugar and caffeine dependency and abuse, etc.:

- The activity initially provides pleasure, or relief from stress and pain.
- We use the activity in a manner, or to an extent, that it has some harmful consequences.
- We continue use despite adverse consequences.
- Withdrawal—We feel worse when we stop.
- We begin to deny, rationalize, and minimize consequences.
- Loss of control, and more denial.
- Failed attempts to stop or control abuse.
- Tolerance—Need more to get the same effect (larger bets, more gambling).
- We may no longer enjoy the activity, but need to do it to feel “normal.”
- Preoccupation
- Craving
- You continue to hit bottom.
- The definition includes a tendency toward relapse.
- The severity of symptoms is progressive.
- “Centrality”—We increasingly center our lives on the activity.

Do any of these sound familiar to you? Yes No

If yes, which ones? _____

What is the substance or action that you are thinking of above?

Example: alcohol or caffeine.

Addiction: ***Gambling vs. Drug and Alcohol***

Similarities

Loss of control

Denial

Similar highs

Depression and mood swings

Chasing

First high (win) remembered

Blackouts/Brownouts

Use as an escape

Preoccupation

Tolerance

Withdrawal

Low self-esteem and high ego

Use of rituals

Differences

Hidden addiction

Can't overdose—no saturation point

Perceptions (social acceptance)

Huge financial problems

Can function at work

Can't be tested

Doesn't require ingestion

Fewer resources available

Gambling affects the same part of the brain with hormones that drugs and alcohol do (exactly as cocaine):

- Serotonin
- Dopamine
- Noradrenergic

Here are some general estimates of substance abuse in problem gamblers:

- 17%—Drug abuse
- 50%—Alcohol abuse
- 7%—Gambling, drugs, and alcohol

J. A. Ewing came up with an assessment called “the cage.” It is quick and easy to assess whether you may have a problem with drugs or alcohol.

CAGE questionnaire:

Cut Down— Has anyone ever suggested that you should cut down on your drinking or drug use?

Annoyed— Do you ever become annoyed by other people’s comments about your drinking or drug use?

Guilty— Have you ever felt guilty about your drinking or drug abuse?

Eye Opener — Do you ever need to use drugs or alcohol in the morning to get yourself going?

Two or more affirmative answers indicate a strong likelihood that dependence is present, and that further assessment is necessary.

1. Types of drinking patterns:

- **Social Drinking**—no problem; doesn’t drink every day, and only 2-4 drinks.
- **Careless Drinking**—minor problems.
- **Problem Drinking**—causes repeated life problems, not physically addicted but drinks to relieve stress daily.
- **Alcoholism**—Loss of control regarding frequency, amount, and duration of consumption.

2. Types of alcoholism:

• **Maintenance Alcoholic-non addicted:**

Early stages of alcoholism when still young. They don’t drink in the morning, and are emotionally addicted, not physically addicted.

• **Maintenance Addicted Alcoholic:**

Physically addicted to the alcohol; seldom looks drunk, but has to keep a steady level of alcohol in his/her body so as not to withdraw.

• **Weekend Alcoholic:**

Not physically addicted. Drinks to the point of drunkenness, and loses control on weekends. Seldom drinks during the week, but “celebrates” holidays and vacations. Responsible in his life and job.

- **Alcoholic:**

Physically addicted to alcohol. Drinks to intoxication daily, and has lost everything. This is the homeless person you see living on the streets. Very small percentage of alcoholics.

- **Binge Alcoholic:**

Periods of heavy drinking followed by periods of abstinence. These can last for days, weeks, or months. Severe negative consequences and loss of control.

- **5:00 pm drinker:**

Drinks only when they get off work to “relax,” and drinks large amounts. Drink every night and on weekends and holidays. Has become emotionally dependent on alcohol. Can’t relax without it.



Interesting “Tidbits” that may or may not shock you:

- Gamblers are often trying to recapture the high of the first “big win,” not the same as, but most similar to, cocaine addicts “chasing” their first high.
- Gambling is extremely difficult to abstain from, most similar to quitting smoking cigarettes.
- For some gamblers, the high is probably most similar to the excitement of speed, cocaine, and sex addiction. For others, it is like a numbing, or escape, similar to the effect of a valium, or other relaxing medications.
- Similar to other addictive people, gamblers come from families with a high rate of dysfunction, such as alcoholism, general trauma, domestic violence, and emotional, verbal, and sexual abuse.
- Gamblers are usually more isolated than drug and alcohol addicts. It is an addiction acted out mostly alone. You don’t even want anyone else to talk to you while you are in your gambling state. Obviously, other gamblers are competition.
- All addicts, including gamblers, live in a fantasy world, with much denial.
- For gamblers in recovery, withdrawals, cravings, and impulses to gamble tend to be much longer and stronger than similar cravings in alcoholics and drug addicts in recovery.
- It is extremely difficult to avoid triggers with gambling, as compared to drug and alcohol addicts. Pay attention to how many times you see signs, billboards, TV

commercials, TV shows, and radio announcements, advertising gambling. They are all inviting you to win something for nothing.

- Withdrawal is most closely related to a mild heroin withdrawal.
- With all addictions, it usually takes a year before you are really ready to deal with the underlying issues that support your addiction.
- Problem gamblers typically become involved in criminal activity earlier in their lives than alcoholics or drug addicts do (writing bad checks, stealing money, using other people's credit cards, ATM cards, signing up for credit cards in other people's names, embezzling from their jobs, and using checks without consent).
- There is something called Post-Acute Withdrawal (PAW), and it says that you will feel the symptoms of withdrawal off and on for up to two years after ceasing gambling. So, if you are going along well in your recovery, and "out of the blue," you feel depressed or confused, you can't concentrate, are clumsy, irritable, and angry, consider PAW. Acknowledge it, and ride through it until it is gone. Be careful of relapse during this time.

*The powerful force within me is always at work,
regardless of what I call it—higher power,
higher spirit, guardian angel,
collective intelligence of the universe,
or God.*

Chapter 30

Support



When starting into recovery, it is very important to surround yourself with a positive support group. It is up to you to put together your own “team” of support. This can be family, friends, your church, people you were in treatment with, and outside support groups, like Gamblers Anonymous. If you cannot find a GA group in your area, you can go online and find information about them at www.gamblersanonymous.org.

The only requirement for GA membership is a desire to stop gambling. Some members use GA as a support group, and to work the Twelve Steps, and others do not. Some use GA to find a sponsor to give them added support, and to walk through the Twelve Steps with them.

Sponsorship works for some, but maybe not for others. A sponsor is someone who has some significant amount of clean time from gambling, an “older” member of GA. There are many types of sponsors. Some are more intense than others, some will want to stay in touch with you daily, others not. Some will have you work the steps right away, and others not. You will need to take your time, and get to know the sponsor you may choose, before you choose them. If you find that the one you have chosen is not the right “fit” for you, it is okay to find someone else. If you find GA and sponsorship to be the right “fit” for you, your sponsor can be very helpful to your recovery.

If you cannot find a GA meeting in your area, go to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. You can still follow the Twelve Steps if you choose, and get some personal support, too. As I stated in the beginning of this book, those who attend treatment and GA have a much higher chance of staying in recovery. This includes aftercare and GA for the rest of your life, if that is what it takes for you to remain abstinent.

GA is about carrying the message of recovery to the compulsive gamblers who want and request help to *not place that first bet.*

I would like to explore Gamblers Anonymous with you in this section. When doing groups at Emergence, I recommend that my clients go to at least three meetings to see if it was something that might work for them. I would suggest the same for you. I understand some people’s feelings that GA is about God, and some of you may not agree with that notion. I would like to clarify what GA is and how it works and share the Twelve Steps with you.

GA and AA are not religions. They are more about spirituality, and your “higher power” can be anything you want it to be. Religion is a type of formal structure where people practice their faith with others who share the same faith, and this place has rules and doctrines to follow.

When we talk about a power greater than ourselves, it can be God for some, but for others it can be nature or your inner strength (your power within),—anything that gives you the strength and support you need to stay in recovery. It is a concept of something helping us through each day, “one day at a time,” to remain on the new path we have chosen.

You have worked very hard to make changes in order to get to this point, so don’t let yourself down by thinking you have it “licked,” and can handle it on your own now. Many addicts have tried to “get clean,” and many have returned to gambling. When attending GA meetings, find someone with some “clean” time behind them, and speak with them about their being your sponsor or mentor. It is good to make one strong connection that you can rely on when in need. You can usually call your sponsor or mentor at anytime for support. They can also help you work through and understand the Twelve Step process.

GA may not be for everyone, but give it just three tries and see for yourself.

***“Working the steps is not a magic wand. When you’re done working them,
you’re not cured. I raced through them, hoping to be ‘cured’...
the Step Twelve brought me back to reality.
I will be working the steps the rest of my life.”***

(Compulsive gambler in recovery)

The 12 Steps

(GA International)

1. We admitted that we were powerless over gambling...that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of this power of our own understanding.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have these defects of character removed.
7. Humbly asked God (of our understanding) to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His Will for us, and the power to carry that out.
12. Having made an effort to practice these principles in all our affairs, we tried to carry this message to other compulsive gamblers.

Admitting you were powerless over gambling is a hard thing to admit and accept.

None of us want to believe that something had more control over us than we did over ourselves. It feels like a failure, but it is not. It is a disease and addiction that is very strong and powerful—powerful enough to get us to do things we never thought we would do.

At what point did you realize that you were powerless over gambling?

Describe how your gambling changed over time: _____

How has gambling had a negative impact on your life, career, and family?

Give two examples of when you felt bad after gambling:

1. _____

2. _____

Have you ever not spent money on necessary items because you wanted the money to gamble? When and on what did you not spend the money?

Describe how gambling has had an effect on you physically. _____

Have you ever considered hurting yourself or taking your life because of gambling? Did you have a plan?

(If you feel this way now or in the future, please ask for help.)

I Have a Dream

*I have a dream
That one day I
Will know the true meaning
Of my life.*

*I have a dream
That someday
We can all set the beast we call
Addiction aside—
But keep it to remind us of the hurt
That it has done.*

*I have a dream
That I know when I am down
And out
God will find someone to pick me up.*

*I have a dream
That God will give me the strength
And will, to help those in need
Of help and understanding.*

(Bill O., Gambler in Recovery)

In what ways has your life become unmanageable?

Emotionally

Spiritually

Family and Friends

Finances

Physically

Illegal Behavior

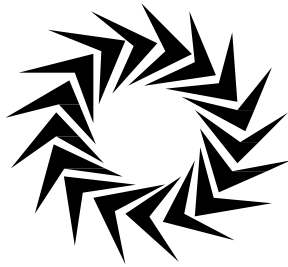
What would your idea of a "higher power" be? _____

Do you believe that GA could be of help and support for you? _____

After attending three GA meetings, how has your perception of GA changed?

Step four is about taking a moral inventory, and this takes a lot of courage.

It is not easy to look at ourselves in such depth—especially the parts we don't like about ourselves, or about who we have become since our loss of control with gambling. Here are some examples of what are considered to be character defects:



- Self-centered
- Irresponsible
- Loss of self-worth
- False Pride
- Self-Pity
- Dishonesty
- Loss of humility

The eighth and ninth steps can be very difficult to do, also, especially, in making amends to those you have harmed while in your gambling addiction.

This takes a lot of courage, also. This shows your level of commitment to quitting gambling, and you should be proud of yourself for getting this far. While in the grips of addiction, we don't know or care whom we hurt along the way.

It is difficult at first to admit that we did hurt anybody; and then to go and speak with these people leaves us with a feeling of vulnerability. "These people" can include family, friends, or co-workers that you lied to, borrowed money from without repaying, or people from whom you stole money.

Who would be on your list? _____

Would speaking with them be difficult for you? Why or why not? _____

What do you expect their reaction to be? _____

When you hear “take it one day at a time,” take it at face value. Say to yourself, “I will not gamble today.” Follow a ritual of taking your inventory daily, and if you find that you have hurt someone or shown some wrong behavior, accept it, take responsibility for it, and **admit** and **amend it**.

*“Everyone in recovery shares at least two things:
the day they quit gambling, and today;
...the days in between are important,...
—but only history.”*
(Compulsive gambler in recovery)



Serenity Prayer

(GA International)

**God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.**

What are some things you don't have control over to change?

What do you have the control to change?

Breathe in fresh calming air, breathe out the toxins in your body and feel inner peace.

Chapter 31

Relaxation



If you have ever tried to stop gambling in the past, or are trying right now, you will understand when I say that it is stressful. Withdrawals themselves can cause symptoms like anger, irritability, anxiety, depression, or grief and loss. All of this is uncomfortable. The reason that we were gambling in the first place may have been to escape something, or to relieve stress... and here it is back again!

I had a client one time who didn't come into treatment angry, and who seemed to be dealing with his withdrawals just fine, until about three months later, and I saw a change in his behavior. I confronted him by asking what was going on, and why

the behavior change? It took some time, but he admitted to having continued gambling for the last three months. This is when the change happened. He said that he couldn't think straight, sleep, or relax, and he felt like he was ready to jump out of his skin. He was treating people around him terribly, snapping at

Withdrawals themselves can cause symptoms like anger, irritability, anxiety, depression, or grief and loss. All of this is uncomfortable. The reason that we were gambling in the first place may have been to escape something, or to relieve stress... and here it is back again!

them, and having no patience. I explained that this was very typical for beginning withdrawals. I shared the idea of relaxation and healthy leisure activities. He hated the idea.

It's funny, when I was running a men's group of twenty men, and I came in with soft light and calming music, they knew immediately what was about to happen "to them!" (women react this way, too). They seemed to immediately "stiffen" up in their chairs, and boy, did they moan! By the time I was done with them, they could barely open their eyes, and were totally relaxed!

I tell you this story in hopes that you will understand how important it is to relax in recovery. That means physically and emotionally.....calm. I will walk through some relaxation techniques, and you can do them yourself, but it is better if someone can do it with you.

First let's explore what is stressful to you now:

What do you consider the most stressful area in your life?

What is the second most stressful area in your life?

Did you have this stress:

Before problem gambling?
During problem gambling?
While going through withdrawals?

One thing to explore first is, "where are you feeling this stress?" There are three ways of experiencing stress:

- In your thinking
- Stress around you—your environment
- In your physical body

Once you decide where you are feeling or getting the stress from, you can then take action to calm it. Here are some options to explore:

Breathing exercises

Physical exercise

Visualization

Recognizing irrational thinking and "stopping" it

Massage

Yoga

Relaxation tapes

Progressive relaxation

If you think that you can't afford a massage, then I want to say to you that you would have had no problem dropping \$100 gambling, so why not spend it on something good for you?

1. Visualization... Pick a spot where you feel comfortable and safe. What does it look like? Visualize it. What does it sound like? What does it feel like? What else do you notice?

Here is an example... Sitting on the warm, sunny beach... I hear the waves softly rolling onto the shore in rhythm... I hear the seagulls singing up above me... the warmth of the sun calms and makes me feel safe and comfortable... I feel the sand through my toes, both hot and cool at the same time... I feel the soft breeze that can give me goose bumps while on a hot beach.

You can escape into this visual anytime during the day. Have a stressful time at work? Shut the door and close your eyes—it only takes a minute.

2. Breathing... This is very simple and quick:

When you feel your blood pressure rising, or you are becoming angry, stop what you are doing, find a comfortable place to sit, or do it right where you stand... Take a deep breath in and say to yourself... “I am bringing in relaxing, fresh air.” As you breathe out, imagine yourself breathing out all the toxins (stress). Say it to yourself out loud or just in your mind.

3. Stretching... Stretch your arms, legs, back, and neck. Let your head roll to the right and hold, let it roll to the left and hold, let it fall forward and hold, breathing as you go.

4. Progressive relaxation... This is great, but it takes more time, and works great with soft lighting and relaxing music. Breathe two times deeply, and release the toxins out with the air. Tighten and relax muscles, tighten for the count of 1... 2... 3... release!

As you breathe in fresh air through your lungs and hold, it grabs the toxins, and as you breathe out, it releases the toxins out of your body through your feet and fingertips.

Start with tightening:

- Your feet..... tighten and hold for 1...2...3**
- Then your calves.... tighten and hold for 1...2...3**
- Your thighs..... tighten and hold for 1...2...3**
- Your buttocks..... tighten and hold for 1...2...3**
- Your stomach..... tighten and hold for 1...2...3**
- Your hands..... tighten and hold for 1...2...3**
- Forearms..... tighten and hold for 1...2...3**
- Upper arms..... tighten and hold for 1...2...3**

- Shoulders..... tighten and hold for 1...2...3
- Neck..... tighten and hold for 1...2...3
- Jaw..... tighten and hold for 1...2...3
- Tiny face muscles tighten and hold for 1...2...3

***When you complete this process, just sit for a minute in quiet.
It should take you a couple of minutes to recover. Try to do one of the exercises
daily, and you will feel much calmer in your withdrawal and recovery process.***



Life is meant to enjoy....go have fun!

Chapter 32

Leisure



Leisure can be described as “free time:” your time to do what you want after you have taken care of other responsibilities in your life. It is something that you enjoy, which relaxes you, and which gives you a social outlet.

When we are “problem gambling,” all of our leisure time (and other time when we should be taking care of responsibilities) is taken up with gambling or thoughts of gambling. Once you stop gambling, in order to be successful in recovery, you must find other things to fill your “leisure” time.

I would say that a solid 80% of my clients said the same thing in the beginning of recovery and treatment: *“If I don’t gamble, what else is there to do? How will I get out of the house and have fun, or relax after a stressful week at*

work?” They could not think of anything else to do! That is why we had to have a special class just on relaxation, and healthy alternatives to gam-

This is about having fun. It is about getting back to doing the things you used to like to do before gambling took over your life. It is about taking a chance and trying something new.

bling. This is where healthy leisure activities come into “play,” so to speak...

In this chapter, we will talk about the barriers to leisure and help you to explore what you *enjoy* doing, and I will give you *many, many* ideas on using your leisure time.

After reading this chapter, and once you have quit gambling, I will ask you to try one leisure activity a week in the beginning. After some time, and seeing how well it works, try one activity a day.

Let’s see what your barriers are—check any that you feel apply to you, and explain why:

Guilt _____

Time _____

Anger _____

- Shame _____
- Transportation _____
- Irrational thoughts _____
- Money _____
- Fear _____
- No one to do things with _____
- No place to go _____
- No equipment _____
- Withdrawing _____
- Isolating _____

This is about having fun. It is about getting back to doing the things you used to like to do before gambling took over your life. It is about taking a chance and trying something new.

What things did you like to do before gambling? _____

What outside interests do you have? What would you like to try? _____

From the list above, what is stopping you from doing these things?

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What would help you to step out and do these things? _____

I find time to enjoy what I love doing most.

□ **Here is a list of a few (dozen!) ideas for you; sometimes it is hard for us who are fresh in recovery to think of things to do –**

Go to a movie	Take a bubble bath	Try a new food
Return something you have borrowed	Waste a little time	Feed the ducks
Take a drive in the country	Take a class	Exercise
Learn how to cook a new dish	Go to a baseball game	READ
Take a walk	Listen to music	Laugh at yourself
Walk instead of ride	Look at old photos	Pop Popcorn
Go to a park	Hike	Bake bread
Meditate	Hug	Be thankful
Travel	Swim	Draw
Play an instrument	Appreciate trees	Volunteer
Do something you always wanted to do	Pay a compliment	Stop and listen
Start a new project	Garden	Paint a room
Call someone you have been thinking about		DREAM
Pick up travel brochures	Let the phone ring	Listen to the rain
Turn off the TV and enjoy silence	Learn a new word	Clean your closet
Walk in the rain	Arrange some flowers	Write a poem
Clean out your wallet or purse	Put old photographs in books	Go parachuting
Watch children play	Go on a bike ride	Rearrange a room
Do something nice for someone	Start a new project	Sail
Learn to fly	Go river rafting	Go boating
Go to a meeting	Join a cultural group	Help the elderly
Take someone out for dinner	Sing in a choir	Go see a play
Go on a roller coaster ride	Go to church	Plant Flowers
Read the dictionary	Go to the library	Get a massage
Tell someone how you feel about them	Ask for help	Do pottery
Drive a different way home	Accept when you are wrong	
Go to the humane society and pet an animal		Bead a necklace
Give yourself a small present	Ride a horse	Go to a festival
Give someone else a massage	Play with your children	Help a stranger
Mentor someone new in recovery	Go water- or snow-skiing	Dance
Home improvements	Ask someone what they would like to do and do it	
Lay in the grass in the backyard and listen		Look at the stars
List three goals	Make candles	Surprise
Go bowling	Rollerblade	Play basketball
Sew something	Lay in a hammock	Cook for friends
Do crafts		

I hope that this list starts you thinking about some healthy alternatives to gambling. I am sure there are thousands more that I could put on the list.

Pick ten ideas from the list above that you would like to do in the near future:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Pick one from this list and do it this week.

1. List five activities that you can do in five minutes or less:

2. List five pleasurable activities that you can do in five minutes to 1 hour:

3. List five activities that you would enjoy from 1 hour to two hours:

4. List five enjoyable activities that would take from two hours to one day:

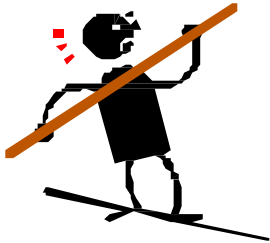
5. What are five vacation ideas that are within your budget?:

Choose one from each category and do them each week.

ENJOY!

I balance my life completely by nourishing my soul as well as my mind and body.

Chapter 33



Balance

	At home	At work	With family
Spiritually	Physically	Socially	At leisure
	Emotionally	Career wise	

After completing this book, you should feel like a new person in some ways. There is still plenty of work... we never stop changing and evolving. Life never stops throwing stuff at us. I hope you have learned some new tools to help you deal with what life hands us... Or at least you have learned how to work on problem solving, stress reduction, or know what works for you and what doesn't work for you.

I want to say CONGRATULATIONS for what you have learned, and for the things you have changed in your life so far.

Finding balance in our life means that we are pretty healthy, and that things are working in all areas of our life.

Well, nobody is perfect!!

What parts of your life are in balance? _____

What parts of your life are still not in balance yet? _____

List the steps to how you would get all areas of your life in balance:

Describe a time when you were determined or worked very hard at something, and were successful. How did you do that? What were the steps you took to get there?

You may have some negative things come up from the past. Don't let them get you down, you are better than that—deal with them as they come, and continue on your path to recovery. Nothing is worth going back and experiencing all that pain all over again.

How Do You Feel About Your Gambling Today?

You will be asked this question throughout the recovery process and this book. This will help you to stay in touch with your feelings. By checking in with yourself regularly, the thoughts and feelings that lead to relapse will not hit you blindly.

Check the box that most closely states how you feel today.

- Denial/Minimizing**—“It’s not that bad, what’s the big deal?”
- Bargaining**—“I’ll only go two times a week,” or “I will pay you back.”
- Hope**—Genuine hopefulness: “I hope to win this time.” Or “I hope to quit this time.”
- Sadness**—Reality sets in: “I have made some bad choices.” “I have hurt others.”
- Guilt/Shame**—“How could I have let myself do this again? I even stole money.”
- Anger**—General or specific, at others, at yourself, or at the gambling itself.
- Acceptance**—“I need help, I can’t do this myself,” or “I can’t stop myself.”
- Optimism**—“I think I can quit, I am feeling more confident every day, I feel good.”
- Contentment**—“There are other things to do besides gambling, I can fight this.”

After doing this small checklist, think back, or look back at the last time you filled it out. (Refer to page 115.)

What is different?

Why do you think it is different?

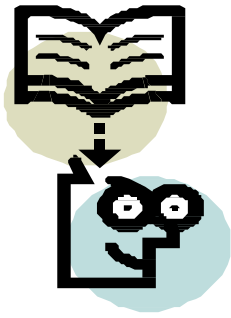
Do you notice any patterns in your answers?



Take a moment to write about your day:

Chapter 34

DEFINITIONS



Here are some definitions of words, language, or jargon used in this book. Please refer to these pages when necessary.

Action: What happens to gamblers when they talk about or act on the urge to gamble. You may go into “action” as you hear others talk about their gambling; it’s a “trigger,” but you need not to act on that feeling, rather, talk about it with someone immediately.

Bad beat: A term used by gamblers to describe a run of bad luck.

Bailout: Money given to gamblers that allows them to pay debts without suffering adverse consequences. Relying on others to bail you out of a difficult financial situation can also include payday cash loans, title loans, bankruptcy, and cashing in life insurance.

Chasing: The attempt by a gambler to make up previous losses through additional gambling, a common symptom of a pathological gambler. Chasing (to win back losses) often involves making larger bets and/or taking greater risks. Although compulsive gamblers chase losses, it’s the chase of the wins that is the hook.

Compulsion: An irresistible urge to do something against one’s better judgment. Compulsive behaviors are often repetitive in nature, and the person recognizes that the compulsion is irrational. Whether or not problem gambling is considered a compulsion is a topic of debate within the mental health profession; the prevailing opinion is that it is not.

Compulsive: An action taken over and over again, even against your own will.

Compulsive/Disordered Gambling: Implies loss of control, and that the individual is engaged in an activity that is no longer enjoyable. The term is limited to cases where the gambling causes serious damage to a person’s social, vocational, or financial life. Informal circles, such as GA often referred to as Compulsive Gambling, and in formal circles such as treatment referred to as Gambling Disorder. It is considered an addiction disorder.

Comorbidity: The presence of multiple disorders in one individual. Pathological gambling has high rates of comorbidity with disorders such as alcoholism, drug abuse, and depression.

Depression: feeling down, loss of interest or pleasure, significant weight loss, insomnia (inability to sleep), or sleep too much, loss of energy, feeling worthless, can’t think or concentrate, and thoughts of death. Symptoms lasting more than two weeks.

Dopamine: A neurotransmitter, or chemical that transmits signals between nerve cells. Dopamine appears to function as an inhibitor. There is some evidence linking dopamine levels with pathological gambling. (See also serotonin)

Euphoric Recall: Remembering the good, high feeling (winning), not the negative feelings after gambling, nor the losses.

Gambling: The act of risking money, property, or something of value, on an activity with an uncertain outcome.

Gambling Disorder: The term used within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5) that describes persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior leading to clinically significant impairment or distress.

Gam-Anon: A fellowship for the families of pathological gamblers, with chapters throughout North America.

Gamblers Anonymous (GA): An international network of groups for people attempting to recover from pathological gambling. Gamblers Anonymous is a 12-step program modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous. Local chapters provide fellowship in which people share their experiences, support, and hope, in order to stop gambling.

GA's definition of gambling: Any betting or wagering, for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance or "skill," constitutes gambling.

Impulse control disorder: A class of disorders characterized by the inability to resist certain acts, usually with harmful consequences. Pathological Gambling was considered in the DSM-IV as an impulse control disorder, as are kleptomania. Pathological Gambling was changed to Gambling Disorder in the DSM-5 and is now classified as an Addiction Disorder.

Impulsiveness: The inability to stop yourself from acting.

Kiting: Writing bad checks against an account that has no funds to cover it. (An illegal act)

Lapse: Temporary slip into gambling, in which one picks oneself back up immediately, and gets right back on the road to recovery.

Mania: A mood disorder characterized by pathological over-excitement.

Neurotransmitter: A chemical substance that naturally occurs in the brain, and is responsible for communication among nerve cells.

Pink Clouding: In the beginning of recovery (the first few months), one may feel highly exultant, as if quitting gambling had been easy. This is a period in which to be especially careful, because relapse can happen quickly.

Problem gambling: Gambling activity that causes difficulty for the individual, but does not meet the full criteria for Gambling Disorder. Sometimes referred to as “at-risk” gambling, though it is not known at what rate problem gamblers become pathological gamblers. Outside of the way this term was used in this book, “problem gambling” is also commonly used as an umbrella term for any gambling that causes problems from mild to severe.

Professional gambler: One who gambles as a way to make part or all of his or her living. Often confused with pathological gamblers, professional gamblers are characterized by taking limited risks, discipline, and restraint, items all lacking in the pathological gambler. Professional gamblers wager on games with skill elements, rather than games of chance, and wait to bet until the odds are more in their favor. Professional gamblers can, however, lose control and exhibit chasing behavior, at which time they become problem or pathological gamblers.

Relapse: Return to harmful behaviors; it does not begin with the first bet. Relapse begins with a series of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that reactivate old patterns of denial, isolation, elevated stress, and impaired judgments. You can be in “relapse” without actually gambling or using. It is a process that takes time. Relapse can be considered a planned gamble.

Serotonin: A neurotransmitter within the central nervous system widely studied in affective disorders and substance abuse. (See also [dopamine.](#))

Slip: Same as a Lapse, not a full relapse.

Social gambler/gambling: Gamblers who exhibit few or none of the difficulties associated with problem or disordered gambling. Social gamblers will gamble for entertainment, typically will not risk more than they can afford, often gamble with friends, chase losses briefly, gamble for limited periods of time, and are not preoccupied with gambling.

Tools: Any certain thought, action, reaction, or help, to keep from gambling or using, i.e., having “many tools in your tool box.”

Triggers: Thoughts, feelings, emotions, places, that cause a desire to return to gambling, in hopes of escaping the (undesirable) reality of what you are feeling or experiencing.

Urges/Cravings: An overwhelming feeling that usually lasts a short period of time, of the absolute need and desire to gamble or use.

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call the gambling helpline:**

U.S.: 1-800-522-4700

Canada: 1-800-391-1111

*For further information about Gamblers Anonymous,
consult your local phone book,
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but am humble enough to ask for help.~*



"We used this book for our advanced training for our experienced problem gambling clinicians. The response from them was overwhelmingly positive. After the training, we decided to pilot an IOP program, using the book as the primary manual for treatment"

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