



RECOVERY ROAD ONLINE

RECOVERY STEP TWO

ZOOM UP THE HIGHWAY OF HOPE



WORKING THE RECOVERY STEPS

“STEP TWO”

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.




SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: OPEN-MINDEDNESS & HOPE



SECOND STEP PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
I know in my heart that only you can restore me to sanity. I humbly ask that you remove all twisted thought and addictive behavior from me this day. Heal my spirit and restore in me a clear mind.





STEP TWO

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

When we begin talking about a power greater than ourselves, we often encounter great resistance based on preconceived ideas about religions and certain spiritual ideas. At the one extreme we have some people who have strong religious beliefs who don't want to have these beliefs challenged. At the other extreme are committed atheists or agnostics who want nothing at all to do with the word "God". The good news for Recovery Road Online members is that we don't have to engage in these debates. The even better news is that whatever your views on these spiritual issues, if you can relax and remain open-minded, you should have no difficulty with this step. Furthermore, this step is critical to moving forward with the other steps of recovery. It cannot simply be skipped.

Worksheet 2A CAME TO BELIEVE

Discuss and reflect about your spiritual history. Return back to your very earliest memories of an understanding of God or Higher Power, any religious experiences (positive or negative), any loss of faith, and your current beliefs (if any) about spirituality.



STEP TWO

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

When we completed Step One, we admitted that we were powerless over gambling – that our life had become unmanageable. If we simply stopped there, we would have no hope. For if we are powerless over gambling, how are we to recover? The answer begins with Step Two. Since we are powerless, we need to find a power that is greater than ourselves who can help us. The amazing thing about this power is that it doesn't matter very much exactly how we define it! The only requirement is that it isn't us. One sponsor joked with his sponsee that was struggling with finding a Higher Power "Why don't you just pick a name randomly out of the phone book to be your Higher Power? They could hardly do a worse job at running your life than you did." Following are just a few of the categories of Higher Powers that people have successfully used in the Recovery Road Online Fellowship:

1) Traditional Theistic Religions

If you are already a member in any sect of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism etc., and you are comfortable in the theology of that faith, you may already be done! This can be especially good if you already have a spiritual practice of prayer and meditation.



STEP TWO

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

2) Alternative Religions/Philosophies

Many of our members struggle with some of the dogma and supernatural components of the traditional theistic religions, but find comfort in many of the traditions, rituals, music etc. They sometimes find that they are more comfortable in Buddhism, Humanism, and the Unitarian Universalist Church etc. These faiths/philosophies offer considerable flexibility in their beliefs and also may incorporate prayer and meditation into their traditions.

3) The Program of Recovery Road Online

It is perfectly OK to use the program (not individual people) of Recovery Road Online as a Higher Power. One member observed that he discovered a distinctive group of compulsive gamblers in the program and he therefore decided that for him GOD would stand for **G**amblers **O**f **D**istinction – meaning the program of Recovery Road Online. Often people who begin using the fellowship as their Higher Power will later have that evolve to a different Higher Power as their spirituality becomes more refined.



STEP TWO

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

4) An Idealized Personification

Some members have developed a mental image of an ideal father figure, mother figure, grandparent, or a caring friend that they find comforting to use as a Higher Power.

5) Nature

It is not uncommon for people to feel the presence of a Higher Power when they are observing the beauty of nature. It is not surprising then that some people use a special tree, a mountain, the ocean, or the universe as their Higher Power. Some of our Native American members are especially comfortable using nature images or a "Great Spirit".

6) Others

One member explained that her Higher Power was nothing more than the inner voice of her conscience that told her that she should practice kindness, generosity, honesty and humility when she prayed for guidance. We have even had Star Wars fans that just used "The Force".



STEP TWO

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

The point is that it really doesn't matter very much what you choose for your Higher Power. There is no requirement that this Higher Power is endowed with any supernatural powers or that it compels you to think differently about science or the physical world. Also, it is very normal for this Higher Power to evolve over time. You need not be stuck with the same Higher Power for your entire life.

In addition, it is not at all important that you understand how or why this power will work in your life! Truthfully most of us don't really understand exactly how electricity works and yet every day we turn on and off switches for multiple electrical devices that we have become very dependent upon. For many of us, the mystery of these spiritual matters is actually an important part of our journey. One member was fond of saying "any God who is small enough for me to understand, is not big enough to do me any good".

For those folks who think that this is all just a bunch of nonsense, we ask "So how is your life going without a Higher Power?" I suspect that since you have found it necessary to come to Recovery Road Online, probably not all that well. For people who have trouble doing this, we suggest that you start by simply "acting as if" you believe or



STEP TWO

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

as we say, “fake it till you make it”. One of our member’s first prayer was “Dear God. I don’t believe in you and think that this is a big waste of time, but I promised my sponsor that I would pray anyway. Amen”. That was enough to get him started and today he is a very spiritual person with many years of clean time.

We can now also set aside any prejudice we have about the word “God”. Many of us have preconceived ideas about what this word means. In Recovery Road Online, we just use the word “God” interchangeably with “Higher Power”. As we discovered earlier in this chapter, we allow for a very broad understanding of a power greater than ourselves and we choose one that is “ a Power of our understanding”. We came to realize that our prejudice against the word “God” was usually based on another person’s understanding of God and not our own. One member tells his story of how he came to believe.

I had a lot of prejudice against organized religion. I considered myself an atheist and I thought that I could never believe in any God. However, I was so desperate to stop gambling that I was willing to try anything. I decided to use as my Higher Power, things in my life



STEP TWO

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

that I already believed in and which had made me feel spiritual. My mother had this recording of the opera singer Joan Sutherland singing Ave Maria which she played at Christmas time. That song always made my spirits soar and feel that there was something bigger than me. I had a similar feeling witnessing the birth of my first son. At other times in my life I felt this feeling of wonder including one night on my vacation in Yosemite where I was lying on a blanket with my young children in a meadow watching shooting stars.

I decided that I was going to take all of those things that gave me that feeling and just call them "God". From studying mathematics, I knew that if $A=B$ and $B=C$, therefore $A=C$. I realized that if I already believed in these things that gave me this feeling and if I called these things God, therefore I believed in God! I then said aloud the four words, 'I believe in God' which I thought I would never be able to say. I suddenly recognized that I had been focusing on all the things that I didn't believe in and had hardly given any thought to the things that I actually did believe in. This was enough for me to continue working the rest of the steps and now I haven't gambled in many years.



STEP TWO

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

I still don't believe in most other people's understanding of God, and therefore I describe myself as a "God loving atheist". I like to watch the confusion on some people's faces when I say this, but it works for me.

Worksheet 2B

A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES

Discuss and reflect God or Higher Power in your life today that you believe might be able to restore you to sanity. If you do not have a Higher Power, write a "job description" detailing the qualities you want in a Higher Power and give it any name. (God, Lord, HP, Father, Mother, Force, Betty, Bob etc.) The only requirement is that it is higher than you – i.e. it is not subject to your will. You can use this invented Higher Power to get started.

Now that we have identified a power greater than ourselves that we can at least use to get started, we also have to develop the faith that this power can restore us to sanity.



STEP TWO

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

So first we need to acknowledge that previously we were not thinking and living “normally”. The truth of the matter is that when it came to gambling, we were actually quite insane. Many people associate insanity with the deranged patient in the asylum banging his head on the wall. Actually, one of the definitions of insane is simply “lacking sound judgment”. One look back at our 1st Step worksheets should make it pretty clear that we were not using sound judgment with respect to our gambling. We were in fact, quite insane.

Newcomers come into Recovery Road Online and see people who are happy, productive, and who haven’t gambled in a long time. When someone asks us today if we are interested in purchasing a raffle ticket or buying a square in the office Super Bowl pool, we smile and simply say “No thanks”. Nothing more. We don’t agonize or feel compelled to explain ourselves. We don’t fight gambling. The problem has just been removed. We have now simply become like the perfectly sane fellow with the peanut allergy who politely declines the peanut sauce at the Thai restaurant. In other words, we have been restored to “sanity”.



STEP TWO

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

All that you need now is just a little bit of faith to acknowledge the possibility that like us, your Higher Power may also help restore you to sanity. If you can have just this small bit of open-mindedness, you are ready to move forward to Step Three.

