



RECOVERY ROAD ONLINE

RECOVERY STEP TWELVE

ZOOM UP THE HIGHWAY OF HOPE



WORKING THE RECOVERY STEPS

“STEP TWELVE”

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive gamblers, and to practice these principles in all our affairs

Spiritual Principle: **SERVICE**

TWELFTH STEP PRAYER

Dear God,
My spiritual awakening continues to unfold. The help I have received, I shall pass on and give to others, both in and out of the Fellowship. I am grateful for this opportunity. I pray most humbly to continue walking, day by day, on the road of spiritual progress. I pray for the inner strength wisdom to practice the principles of this way of life in all I do and say. I need You, my friends and the program every hour of every day. This is a better way to live.



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HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS A RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO COMPULSIVE GAMBLERS EVERYWHERE, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

The essential element of working Step Twelve is “Action”. This step is not about sitting quietly and contemplating the world and our place in it. Here we are moving beyond simply creating lists and attempting to derive insights from them. Step Twelve is a commitment to life changing behavior.

Often, Step Twelve is associated only with carrying the message to other compulsive gamblers. This is unquestionably a fundamental component of our recovery and we will have much to say about this later in this chapter. However, the more difficult part of this step is “made an effort to practice these principles in all our affairs”. This part of the step is worthy of significant discussion as well.

In prior steps, we have explored spiritual principles such as kindness, generosity, honesty and humility. In our Eleventh Step Prayer, we identified an ideal for human behavior that we could strive for – while fully understanding that we would regularly fall short of this ideal. Now in Step Twelve, it is imperative that we make an effort to practice these principles in all of our affairs. Hypocrisy is



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one of the dubious luxuries of normal gamblers. We cannot be like so many of those folks that go to church on Sunday to rationalize their sinning during the rest of the week. With our progressive illness, we absolutely must strive to walk the walk as well as talk the talk. If we do not change our behavior, we will likely gamble again. While we may have more bets to place, we may not have another recovery in us, and the consequences of our next gambling spree could be catastrophic.

Like many of the revelations in the steps, this is not so difficult as it first appears. A simple place to start with this new behavior is with our family and friends. When we read the Eleventh Step prayer, we can ask ourselves the simple question "How can I be more helpful to the people in my life today?" Then we need to take action. This means visiting or calling people who might be lonely and ask them to tell you about how things are going with them and spending time just listening. This means offering to help people move, or cook, or clean, or drive, or whatever our skills or talents allow.



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Often the workplace can be a very toxic environment for compulsive gamblers. The egos and stress of overwork can certainly bring out the worst in people. We have learned in Recovery Road Online though that “when things go wrong, we do not have to go with them”. We can become the calm instead of the storm. When it seems that there is chaos everywhere, we just smile and say the simple words, “How may I help?” The reaction is often amazing. Sometimes we inspire others to focus on the problem at hand and jointly find a solution. Regardless of the reaction of others however, we always find improvement in our own peace of mind as we are secure in the knowledge that we did the best we could to help the situation and the outcome is now in God’s hands.

This also means that in the workplace we must conduct ourselves with the highest ethics possible. We can no longer steal time or cheat on our expense reports. We can no longer have secret, dishonest relationships with co-workers. We can no longer participate in cruel gossip about people who we really have made no sincere effort to get to know or to try to better understand their lives.



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Finally, we are now useful citizens of the world. We can no longer duck our heads when there is a call for volunteers to help at our kid's school, our place of worship, our local non-profit, or our Recovery Road Online meeting. With all of the time we spent gambling now available, there can really be no excuse for not being as useful as we can be.

Carrying the message to the compulsive gambler is in many ways the real heart of our success – both individually and as a fellowship. The wonderful paradox of our recovery is that “we cannot keep it unless we give it away”. Recovery Road Online is full of “old-timers” that have not gambled in many years. What most of them have in common is a high level of service to the fellowship. These are the folks that reach out and welcome the newcomers, that secretary our meetings, and serve on our boards and committees. These old-timers often have sponsored numerous members. Some of their sponsees have stayed clean and have made amazing, wonderful changes in their lives as they have become freed from the bondage of compulsive gambling. Many of the sponsees however, have gone



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back to gambling and have ended up living sad and tragic lives. Regardless, the old-timer somehow manages to go year after year without placing a bet! This is the primary lesson of Step Twelve. The recipient of the message does not always benefit, but the carrier of the message always does! For anyone that truly wants to stop gambling, there is no better tool than working with newcomers!

A common pitfall to service is a phrase we borrowed from Country and Western dancing – “The Two-Step”. This refers to folks who come to Recovery Road Online, admit they are powerless, and now immediately want to run out and save all the other compulsive gamblers. In other words, they jump from Step One to Step Twelve. This is often based in ego rather than a sincere desire for spiritual growth and achieving a joyful life free from gambling. What happens is that they try to carry a message that they do not actually have themselves and often end up just carrying the mess instead of the message. This is not to say that newcomers cannot and should not be involved in service. They absolutely should be encouraged to greet other members, make coffee, and even run meetings after two



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or three months in the program. Often times, folks at their first meeting can relate to some person who has not gambled in ninety days a lot more than to some old fogey that has twenty-years clean. However, newcomers in the program should not try to pretend to be experts on the steps and work with sponsees until they have at least worked them all themselves.

The great thing about service in Recovery Road Online is that there are many diverse opportunities for all members, regardless of their talents or skills. Some members really enjoy going through the steps and have the patience and understanding to make great sponsors. Others are perhaps more introverted and are more comfortable getting to meetings early to make sure the chairs are set up and coffee is made. There are those members too, who thrive in business meetings and like to work at the level of administrators, chairperson for meetings, and represent the fellowship of RRO. Getting involved in live meetings with other fellowships, helping to plan and organize social functions or host local conferences can be lots of fun and is a great way to meet people as well as perform



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important work in the fellowship. The point is there are opportunities for service for all members, and that is where you typically find the folks who never seem to gamble.

While this concludes the formal text on working the steps of Recovery Road Online, we hope that your recovery is never concluded. For many of us, working these steps has given us the new freedom and the new happiness that was in our Promises. We now truly comprehend the word serenity and we know peace. Before we began this journey, we could not have imagined a life without gambling. For most of us now, we cannot imagine a life without recovery.

In addition to all of the rewards we have been given from working these steps, perhaps most importantly we have received the profound gift of gratitude. Many of us now proclaim without reservation that we are “grateful compulsive gamblers”. We would not think of trading this wonderful life of recovery for the boring life of a “normal gambler” who has no tools for dealing with resentments, fears, guilt, or character defects.



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When we begin to feel that life has treated us unfairly, we have learned to sit down and begin to write a gratitude list. If we have a roof over our head, food in our cupboard, and access to clean drinking water, we think of all the people in the world that lack these basic necessities. Then we think of the fellowship of Recovery Road Online and our higher power, who have delivered us from the pain of the insidious illness of compulsive gambling. Usually, before we get too far on our list, we begin to feel a full and thankful heart and the knowledge of how blessed we truly are today.



*We travel together
As one in fellowship,
And we pave the road
As we walk it
For all who may follow.*

*No matter how far we have come,
Or how far we know we have to go,*

*When we live
In abstinence,
In recovery,*

The journey continues...