

Sponsor/Sponsee First Step Work Sheet

We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.

The first mistake that many of us make when we come into the program is that we think drugs are the problem. When we say to the newcomer that drugs are only a symptom of a much deeper problem (addiction), it is hard for them to understand this.

To get a better understanding of addiction, we must look at the disease concept of addiction. From that point of view, addiction is a disease of attitudes, personality, and a general negative outlook, that is rooted in fear, insecurity and low self-esteem. The main ingredients of addiction are obsession and compulsion. Obsession is that fixed idea that takes us back time and time again to our particular drug or some substitute. (The substitution being anything that makes us feel good and provides us with instant gratification. Ex: money, power, sex, food, anger, etc.) This is to recapture the ease and comfort we once knew. Compulsion is having started the process with one fix, one pill, one drink or one substitute; we cannot stop through our own power of will. Because of our physical sensitivity to drugs and anything that makes us feel good, we are completely in the grip of a destructive power greater than ourselves.

Looking at addiction from that point of view, we see how addiction makes our lives unmanageable, with or without drugs. At this point, we must surrender and accept how powerless we are over our addiction. When we do this, a very strange thing happens; we begin to gain power through the (WE) part of the program and the next eleven steps. It has often been said that the first step addresses our past and the things from our past that are with us today. The next eleven steps are about our future.

Now that we have a better understanding of our addiction, let us look at some ways we can apply the first step in our daily lives. The most obvious is that we can't pick up that first fix, pill, or drink or our lives will become unmanageable. We must accept and surrender to this **JUST FOR TODAY**. Let's now take a look at some non-chemical ways we must apply this step in our lives.

1. You go out to your car in the morning and it has a flat tire. Rather than feeding into the addictive attitudes of anger or frustration, which will create unmanageability, we must accept and surrender to the fact that the tire is flat. Surrendering and using this step on everyday problems, thus making our lives manageable.
2. Another situation could be that you go out to your car, start it, and the motor dies. It can't be fixed. You need it for your job. You must be able to apply the first step to this situation. Accepting and surrendering that the car cannot be fixed, you then gain the power to move forward to find alternate transportation. You can refuse to surrender, refuse to apply the step and let your life become unmanageable. The choice is yours. As you see, the first step can be and must be applied in all areas of our life. This is called living the steps. The bottom line is drugs are one symptom of our disease. The only relief we get from our disease is by working the steps. It is a new and exciting experience that will bring many changes into our lives.

The following questions you are to be written out on a separate sheet of paper to go over with your sponsor:

1. What is the disease of addiction?
2. Why is being clean not enough?
3. How was my life unmanageable in my addiction?
4. How is my life unmanageable in my recovery?
5. How do I apply the first step in my life?
6. How are our steps different than any other 12-step program?
7. Am I willing to accept the steps as a way of life?

One last thing that must be pointed out is the WE portion of this step and all our steps. All of our steps begin with WE except the 12th, which has the word WE in the center. This makes us different than any other 12-step program. Narcotics Anonymous is a WE program not a ME program. Part of our strength and power come from WE. Together we can. I can't. WE can. This is why we need meetings for the rest of our lives. This is why we need contact daily with other recovering addicts. Another question many newcomers ask is, "if I stop using, shouldn't I be cured and I won't need the program or meetings anymore?" The only way I know to clear up this denial is to answer it this way: a non-addict (a person who does not have the addictive personality) who goes to the hospital for an operation and is given a physically addictive drug for pain during a period of two weeks. He becomes physically addicted. They detoxify him and he goes on with his life without any problems. However, addicts with the disease of addiction, have addictive personalities, we are addicted long before we used.

Spiritual Principle: Surrender & Acceptance