

## Step 1

**We admitted we were powerless over gambling – that our lives had become unmanageable.**

### GA Sharing Recovery Through Gamblers Anonymous

In the first step of the Recovery Program members admit their powerlessness over gambling and learn to accept the truth about compulsive gambling – that it is an incurable progressive illness which only can be arrested through total abstinence from gambling. Members acknowledge that they were powerless to control their lives when gambling dominated their actions. Through this admission members gain the inner strength to deal with their problems and face responsibilities.

In Step One compulsive gamblers are asked to accept the fact that their lives had become unmanageable. Members acknowledge that the gambling illness disrupted their financial stability and many other aspects of their lives, including family, work and other personal relationships. The admission and acceptance that comes with Step One and pre-requisite to controlling the destructive behavior caused by compulsive gambling.

The first step of the Recovery Program is just as important to someone who has abstained for a considerable period of time as it is to a newcomer. By regularly reviewing Step One, members are reminded of the past so they will not repeat it.

Discussion – How did Gambling disrupt your:

- financial stability \_\_\_\_\_
- family \_\_\_\_\_
- work \_\_\_\_\_
- other personal relationships \_\_\_\_\_
- anything else \_\_\_\_\_

## 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 reputations?
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 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 all your money 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 you family?
14. Did you ever gamble longer than you had planned?
15. Have you ever gambled to escape worry, trouble, boredom, loneliness, grief or loss?
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 gamblers answer yes to at least 7 of these questions.**

What question do you answer yes to that leads you to accepting your powerlessness or unmanageable life? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

*Gamblers Anonymous Working the Steps Pamphlet*

We at Gamblers Anonymous, believe our gambling problem is an emotional illness, progressive in nature, which no amount of human will-power can stop or control. We have facts to support this belief. We believed, at one time or another, that all of our problems could be solved with a big win. Some, pathetically, even after making a big win, found themselves in worse trouble within a short period of time. We continued to gamble, we found we had risked loss of family, friends, security and jobs. We still continued to gamble. We gambled to the point where it resulted in imprisonment, insanity or attempted suicide. We still continued to gamble and were unable to stop. We fell victim to a belief that if only our financial problems could be solved, we would be able to stop gambling or even be able to gamble like normal people. Many times we swore we would not gamble again believing we had the will-power to stop gambling. We believed a lie. We believed we had the power to stop or control our gambling. Our inability to honestly look at our gambling problem enabled us to continue to gamble. In spite of all of the evidence from our past, we still denied the truth about or gambling.

Upon entering Gamblers Anonymous, we must develop the ability to honestly look at our gambling. This is the first step in our process of recovery. Without honesty, we can not admit our powerlessness over gambling. We must honestly accept, admit and unconditionally surrender to this powerlessness in order to proceed with our recovery. Any reservations we had or may presently have that we can gamble again means we still believe we are not powerless over gambling and that we have not admitted or accepted our powerlessness (either we have power of gambling or we don't).

To those member who have difficulty with admitting their powerlessness over gambling, they should write about their gambling, and the destruction their gambling has caused and their countless futile attempts to stop gambling. Use the "20 Questions" as a guide. Write extensively, thoroughly and specifically using each of the questions as a central focal point. Only with the awareness and the acceptance of the hopelessness, helplessness and desperation of our situation (as compulsive gamblers) can we develop the open-mindedness required for Step Two.

Step one tells us that admitting our gambling defeat is humiliating and we naturally resent this show of weakness.

1. This opposes our instincts.
2. Destruction is at hand when we gamble.
3. We are at war with ourselves when attempting to gamble denying our failure and unwilling to admit our weakness.

Discuss:

- A. When did we first discover and/or sense the problem of our compulsive gambling?
- B. Describe instances that prove we can no longer gamble normally

In GA we discover that admitting our gambling problem to others has become the foundation on which our recover will be built.

1. Our foundation can only be strong as our continued belief that we are powerless
2. Our reservations about being powerless over gambling (doubt), block our recovery.

Discuss:

- A. Has acceptance of our “powerlessness” gone while attending meetings?
- B. Have we stopped searching for answers and causes of our gambling problem and started to deal with the problem on a daily basis? Explain...

Step One announces we are instinctively shocked when told that will power and self-knowledge will not break our obsession to gamble.

Discuss:

- A. How has will power failed in the face of gambling?
- B. What is the meaning of the slogan “Keep it simple”?
- C. Have we begun to come to Gamblers Anonymous for our own personal survival – not to satisfy others?

Our failing brought us to GA. By admitting and accepting our problem we become willing to listen and remain open-minded.

Discuss:

- A. How we learn by attending meeting regularly.
- B. Are regular meeting a chore or source of relief?
- C. Has our ability to listen improved steadily or are we bored at times?
- D. Is Gamblers Anonymous our mirror?