

STEP 12

Having made an effort to practice these principles in all our affairs, we tried to carry this message to other compulsive gamblers.

This is the most popular step of all; even brand new members want to give of themselves. The bottom line, however, seems to be that one cannot give away something that one does not have. Saying it another way, you cannot carry the recovery program to another unless you are practicing the twelve steps in your life, one day at a time. Then you will have a strong message to carry.

Ask yourself if this is a spiritual program and it is. The chances are that your spiritual bankruptcy was complete. Most of us early in our gambling career abandoned our spiritual values. Now as these values are returning and with gratitude you will want to share them with other members as once they were shared with you. Listening and hearing what the other members are experiencing is probably the first opportunity you will have to help. Sometimes we teach when we should be listening. Listening itself will communicate to others your personal understanding of what they are saying. Let's reflect. Do you remember how low in self-esteem you were when you attended your first Gamblers Anonymous meeting? You had no faith and therefore no hope. As you listened and talked and eventually looked at yourself and the others (who seemed happy around the table) faith and hope slowly returned.

Recall that the first member you met came to the meeting early, arranged the table, put out the combo books and put on water for coffee. Was he working Step Twelve? Yes, by showing you he cared for you and all the other members. Caring seems a prime and necessary ingredient in order to work this Step. If you don't care, how can you share?

Then this caring member told you that the program was and must be self-help. Then, he explained another Gamblers Anonymous paradox. If you give of yourself and try to help another human being, you will gain from the act of giving even if your effort fails. It is in giving that we receive and so it becomes self-help. Remember two words — effort and tried. Success in this Step is putting forth the effort and trying to carry the message — not how many heard you or followed your advice.

When you left the meeting you had to return to the wreckage you had created. You gave your phone number and received a phone list. You were probably too shy and ashamed to make a call but within the next day or so a member called you. It wasn't so much what was said as the fact that someone cared enough to call. This serves to revitalize your faith and hope. Again, caring embodies all the nice elements of spiritual growth.

As you started to come out of the fog; you had a sponsor and hoped he would give you the time, experience and wisdom. This unwritten contract to help another seems the highest degree of working Step Twelve; it is caring at the highest level.

Following are some of the many ways by which one can practice Step Twelve:

Be an example of quality abstinence.

Accompany another member on a Twelve Step call.

Visit sick members.

Phone members.

Chat after meetings with new members or those with problems.

Assume some of the duties, obligations and responsibilities of the Fellowship.

Explain your disease and how you arrested it to relatives, doctors and employers.

Tell your story to help a fellow member.

Do public relations work.

Practice the Gamblers Anonymous Program.

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Step Twelve offers us the opportunity to use our new knowledge and GA experience. Putting it to work! Success means trying.

1. Helping other compulsive gamblers in and outside the fellowship.
2. "Giving" which demands nothing in return.

DISCUSS:

- A. Are we ready and willing to help others?
- B. What does "ready" mean and can we help others as "newcomers?"
- C. What is 12 Step Work? Sponsoring, telephone calls, clean-up, etc. ...

We find in Step Twelve that we have received a special gift by working the entire recovery program.

1. Life is not a dead end. There is purpose to life.
2. We are now an example of "recovery" through the GA Program.

DISCUSS:

- A. Personal experience with previous 11 Steps.
- B. Is the job finished?
- C. Why do many members say "I am a grateful compulsive gambler?"

Some members are prone to "two stepping" - working only Steps One and Twelve.

1. Sponsoring other members becomes discouraging.
2. We often give advice where we are not qualified and then feel hurt when we are rejected.

DISCUSS:

- A. Guiding new members — GA suggestions.
- B. Do we tend to over-manage circumstances? Can we be too involved in a member's recovery?
- C. The need to attempt to work all twelve steps.

We can carry our GA spirit into our daily affairs.

1. Adjusting to all conditions.
2. Our GA efforts provide the tools to overcome wearying problems which plague the unprepared.

DISCUSS:

- A. How we reflect and see our growth in the angry and confused behavior of others while we are calm and confident.
 - B. What your personal ABSTENTION from gambling symbolizes.
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