

The Anonymous 12 Step Working Guide

WELCOME

If you are reading this, there is likely something in your life that feels out of control.

Maybe you've tried to stop.

Maybe you've promised yourself "this is the last time."

Maybe you've changed the behavior, but the thinking and patterns remain.

This workbook is for anyone who feels trapped in cycles they cannot seem to break—no matter how strong their intentions are.

You do **not** need to belong to any specific fellowship to use this workbook.

You do **not** need to label yourself.

You only need honesty.

This guide is written in the spirit of the **First Step** as understood across many anonymous recovery programs:

that we reach a point where willpower alone is no longer enough, and life begins to feel unmanageable.

This is not about shame.

It is not about failure.

It is about clarity.

When we see the truth of our situation—without excuses, without self-attack—something powerful happens.

We stop fighting reality, and we begin opening to change.

Inside these pages, you will be invited to gently explore:

- How obsession and compulsion show up in your life
- The ways control has slipped away
- How your values and actions may conflict
- What "unmanageable" truly means to you
- What you are ready to release

There are no right or wrong answers here.

This is your personal reflection space.

Go slowly. Be kind to yourself.
Honesty is the only requirement.

You are not broken.
You are becoming.

Preface

This PDF was created in response to requests from Anonymous Programs, a fellowship seeking a consistent and standardized way to work the Twelve Steps. Beginning in the early 1980s, members submitted various step guides and worksheets, highlighting the need for a unified approach.

These guides are intended for members at any stage of recovery—from newcomers to those with long-term clean time—and are designed to grow alongside the fellowship's increasing diversity and experience.

The pdf does not claim to provide recovery itself; rather, it offers tools to help members work toward recovery through personal experience. Members are encouraged to adapt the guides as needed, but not to use them alone. Sponsorship is emphasized as essential, as true change comes from actively working the steps with guidance, not merely reading about them.

These guides aim to encourage, inspire, and support members in making the Twelve Steps a living part of their recovery.

Hope gives us something positive to look for and move toward. In sharing our common welfare, we find the courage to admit our need for help.

This is a comprehensive guide of Step One, with the other 11 Steps following.

Step One

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

Every "first" marks a beginning, and the First Step is the beginning of the recovery process. Healing starts here; we cannot move forward until this step is worked. Some members approach the First Step intuitively, while others work it in a more structured way. Our reasons for formally working Step One vary. Some of us are new to recovery, exhausted after fighting and losing a battle with our addictions. Others have been abstinent for some time but discover that the disease has become active in another area of life, once again revealing our powerlessness and unmanageability. Sometimes growth is not driven by pain at all—it may simply be time to work the steps again and begin the next stage of our ongoing recovery journey.

For some, it is comforting to recognize that a disease—not a moral failing—has brought us to this point. Others are less concerned with the cause and simply want relief. Whatever brings us here, it is time to do the work: to take concrete action that helps us gain freedom from our addiction, in whatever form it is currently taking. Our goal is to internalize the principles of Step One, deepening our surrender and making acceptance, humility, willingness, honesty, and open-mindedness a fundamental part of who we are.

Surrender is essential, and there are many paths to it. For some, the experiences that led us here are enough to convince us that unconditional surrender is our only option. Others begin this step without full certainty that they are addicts or that they have reached bottom. Through working the First Step, we come to understand our addiction, recognize that we have reached bottom, and accept the need to surrender.

Before beginning Step One, abstinence is necessary—whatever it takes. For newcomers, this often means stopping drug use to clearly see its effects on our lives. For those who have been clean for some time, it may mean stopping other compulsive behaviors that have made life unmanageable. Without abstinence, true surrender is clouded, and the work of the First Step cannot fully begin.

The *Nature of our Addiction* is a chronic condition that affects us physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. It is not limited to the use of our D.O.C or Habits, but influences our thoughts, behaviors, and relationships. Left untreated, it progresses

and leads to unmanageability in our lives. Recovery begins when we acknowledge this disease and take action through the Twelve Steps.

What defines us is *The Nature of our Addiction*—not the substances or behaviors themselves, but the addiction. There is something within us that makes us unable to control our use or involvement. This same “something” also makes us prone to obsession and compulsion in other areas of our lives.

We can recognize when our addiction is active by the patterns we fall into. When we become trapped in obsessive, compulsive, and self-centered routines—endless loops that lead nowhere but physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual decline—the disease is at work.

What does “The Nature of Addiction” mean to me? Has my addiction been active recently? If so, in what ways?

For many of us, “**The Nature of Addiction**” is not mainly about substances. It’s about a **way of relating to life**.

It often shows up as:

- A mind that doesn’t easily rest
- A tendency to go to extremes (all or nothing)
- A constant search for relief, control, certainty, or escape
- Difficulty sitting with discomfort, uncertainty, or emotional pain
- A drive to change how I feel instead of accepting how I feel

At its core, the Addiction can feel like:

“I need something outside of myself to be okay.”

It’s the part of me that:

- Turns feelings into problems that must be fixed immediately
- Turns wants into needs
- Turns discomfort into urgency
- Turns thoughts into commands

So “**The Nature of Addiction**”, for me, is a pattern of **obsession and compulsion** that pulls me away from balance, connection, honesty, and serenity.

Has my addiction been active recently?

The addiction is active whenever I notice patterns like:

- Replaying the same thoughts over and over
- Becoming mentally stuck on a person, situation, or outcome
- Feeling driven rather than choosing
- Acting first and justifying later
- Seeking control instead of acceptance
- Avoiding feelings through distraction, intensity, or busyness
- Needing things to go my way in order to feel okay

Even without substances, the disease can be active in:

- Relationships
- Work
- Finances
- Food
- Sex
- Technology
- Helping, fixing, or rescuing others
- Isolating or withdrawing

If so, in what ways?

Some common ways it shows up:

- Obsessive thinking that feels urgent and convincing
- Compulsive behaviors that promise relief but create more discomfort later
- Rationalizing or minimizing my behavior
- Blaming circumstances or other people
- Comparing myself to others to justify my actions
- Feeling restless, irritable, or discontent without a clear reason
- Losing my sense of proportion
- Feeling spiritually disconnected or emotionally numb

The addiction isn't loud all the time. Often it's subtle:

- "Just this once."

- “I deserve this.”
- “It’s not that bad.”
- “I’ll deal with it later.”
- “I know better than this, but...”

These are often the quiet voices of the disease.

A gentle truth

The addiction doesn’t mean I’m broken.

It means I have a **chronic condition of the mind and spirit** that needs ongoing care.

When it’s active, it’s usually a signal that I need:

- More honesty
- More connection
- More structure
- More spiritual and emotional support
- More willingness to pause instead of react

Step One: Guided Workbook for Self-Discovery

For use in all Anonymous Programs (AA, NA, etc.)

1) What happens to my thoughts and behavior when I become obsessed with something?

Recognizing Obsession and Unmanageability

Opening

Step One invites us to look honestly at the ways our thinking and behavior become unmanageable. One of the clearest ways this happens is through obsession. Obsession narrows our focus, distorts our thinking, and pulls us away from our values, relationships, and well-being.

When obsession is active, one idea, desire, or feeling begins to dominate our mind. We replay it over and over, feel urgency around it, and start believing it is far more important than it truly is. This workbook section is designed to help you recognize how obsession operates in your life so you can better understand when your disease is active and when you need to return to recovery.

Understanding Obsession

When I become obsessed, my thinking becomes narrow and intense. One idea or desire starts to dominate my mind, and I replay it over and over. It feels urgent, and I convince myself that this thing is very important, even when it really isn't.

My thinking usually follows a familiar pattern. It often begins with discomfort, stress, or an emotional trigger. I start looking for something that will change how I feel. I focus on how

this will bring relief, control, or escape. I minimize the risks and ignore the consequences. I tell myself I deserve it, that I can handle it, or that this time will be different.

As the obsession grows, I become restless and irritable. I have trouble being present with people and responsibilities. My thoughts loop, and it becomes hard to think clearly or make balanced decisions. I may start acting in ways that go against my values, even though I can see the harm.

Looking back, I can see that my thinking is not calm or flexible—it is driven, repetitive, and self-centered. This is usually a sign that my disease is active and that I need to slow down, reach out for support, and return to recovery principles.

The Pattern of My Obsession

When I become obsessed, my mind narrows. One thing starts to take up more and more space in my thoughts until it feels like everything revolves around it. I replay it. I plan around it. I justify it. Even when I try to think about something else, my mind pulls me back.

This pattern usually looks like:

- It starts with a strong desire or emotional trigger.
- I begin to focus on how this thing will make me feel better, more comfortable, or more in control.
- I minimize the risks and consequences.
- I tell myself I “need” this or that it will fix what I’m feeling.
- I become restless, irritable, or distracted if I can’t act on it.
- Eventually, my actions start to reflect the obsession, even when I know it may not be healthy.

When I am in this state, my feelings become intense and unbalanced. I may feel anxious, driven, impatient, or disconnected from others. I may ignore responsibilities, relationships, or my own well-being. The obsession begins to guide my choices instead of my values.

Self-Reflection Questions

Take time to answer honestly. Write as much or as little as you need.

A. What does obsession feel like for me?

What happens in my thoughts, emotions, and body when I become fixated on something?

B. What usually triggers my obsessive thinking?

(Stress, loneliness, fear, boredom, conflict, fatigue, etc.)

C. What do I tell myself when I am obsessed?

What justifications or beliefs show up?

D. How does obsession affect my behavior?

How do my actions, priorities, or relationships change?

E. How does obsession pull me away from my values and recovery?

F. What are my personal warning signs that my disease is active?

Closing Reflection

Step One is about seeing the truth. When obsession takes over, my thinking becomes driven instead of balanced, and my choices stop being guided by my values. Recognizing this pattern is not a failure—it is a breakthrough.

The more clearly I can see how obsession works in my life, the more willing I can become to pause, ask for help, and return to the principles that keep me grounded in recovery. Awareness is the beginning of freedom.

2) When a thought comes to me, do I act on it right away without thinking through the consequences? In what other ways does my behavior become compulsive?

Recognizing Compulsive Behavior

Opening

Step One asks us to take an honest look at how our thinking and behavior become unmanageable. Compulsive behavior is one of the ways this shows up. When I act compulsively, I feel driven by urges, discomfort, or emotional pressure rather than by clear thinking or personal values.

This section helps identify how compulsion operates in my life so I can better recognize when my disease is active and when I need to slow down, reach out for support, and return to recovery.

Understanding My Compulsive Patterns

When a strong thought or urge appears, I often feel an internal pressure to act quickly. It feels uncomfortable to sit with the feeling, so I try to relieve it by doing something right away. I do not always pause to consider long-term consequences. Instead, I focus on short-term relief.

In those moments, my decision-making becomes more emotional than thoughtful. I react instead of responding. I may tell myself that it is not a big deal, that I can fix any problems later, or that this will make me feel better.

Some ways my compulsive behavior shows up include:

- Replaying situations in my mind and overthinking them
- Trying to control people, outcomes, or situations

- Acting impulsively with time, money, or commitments
- Avoiding uncomfortable feelings instead of dealing with them
- Repeating behaviors I know are unhealthy, even after negative results
- Having difficulty stopping once I start

These patterns show me that my behavior is not always guided by my values, but by urges and discomfort.

Self-Reflection Questions

Take time to answer honestly.

A. What does it feel like when I am about to act compulsively?

What thoughts, emotions, or physical sensations show up?

B. What kinds of situations or emotions most often trigger my compulsive behavior?

C. What do I usually tell myself in these moments?

(Examples: “It’s not a big deal,” “I need this,” “I’ll fix it later.”)

D. How does acting on impulse affect my life, relationships, or self-respect?

E. What patterns do I see repeating in my compulsive behavior?

F. How does compulsion pull me away from my values and recovery?

Closing Reflection

Step One is about recognizing the truth of how my life becomes unmanageable. Compulsive behavior shows me that I am not always in control when my disease is active. Awareness of this pattern gives me the chance to pause, reach out, and make more intentional choices.

Each time I notice an urge and choose to slow down instead of reacting, I strengthen my connection to recovery. Honesty about my compulsions is not a weakness — it is the doorway to change.

3) How does the self-centered side of my addiction impact my life and the lives of others?

Recognizing Self-Centered Thinking

Opening

Step One invites me to look honestly at the way my addiction shapes how I think, feel, and relate to the world. One of the clearest signs of this is self-centered thinking. When this part of my addiction is active, I begin to see life mainly through my own needs, fears, and desires. My focus turns inward, and my ability to stay balanced, connected, and present becomes limited.

This section helps me explore how self-centered thinking shows up in my life and how it affects both me and the people around me.

Understanding My Self-Centeredness

The self-centered part of my addiction causes me to see life mainly through my own needs, fears, and desires. My thoughts often revolve around how I feel, what I want, and how situations affect me, rather than considering others equally.

In my own life, this leads to poor decisions, emotional instability, and repeated problems. I may become impatient, resentful, or defensive when things do not go my way. I often feel stressed, dissatisfied, or disconnected, even when nothing is obviously wrong. My focus on myself prevents me from experiencing peace and balance.

In the lives of others, my self-centeredness can create distance and tension. I may overlook their feelings, break commitments, or expect understanding without offering the same. People may feel unheard, taken for granted, or hurt by my behavior. Even when I do not intend harm, my actions can affect their trust and sense of safety.

This pattern shows me that my addiction is not just about my behavior — it is about how I relate to the world.

Self-Reflection Questions

Take time to answer honestly and with compassion.

A. How does self-centered thinking show up in my daily life?

What do I notice about my thoughts, reactions, and attitudes?

B. When things do not go my way, how do I usually respond?

C. How does focusing mainly on myself affect my emotions and peace of mind?

D. How might my self-centered behavior affect the people in my life?

E. In what ways have I overlooked, dismissed, or misunderstood others because of this pattern?

F. What would it look like to respond with more humility, empathy, or responsibility?

Closing Reflection

Step One helps me see that my Addiction is not only about what I do, but about how I think and relate to the world. When I am caught in self-centeredness, I lose connection, balance, and peace. Recognizing this pattern gives me the opportunity to change.

Each moment I practice awareness, empathy, and humility, I step away from isolation and toward recovery. Seeing the truth about myself is not a punishment — it is the beginning of growth and freedom.

4) In what ways has my addiction impacted me physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually?

How My Disease Affects My Whole Life

Opening

Step One invites me to look honestly at how my addiction impacts every part of my life. It is not limited to one behavior or one area—it affects my body, mind, emotions, relationships, and spiritual well-being. Understanding this helps me see why my life becomes unmanageable and why recovery must be a whole-life process, not just a change in one habit.

This section helps me explore how my addiction shows up in physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual ways.

How My Addiction Shows Up

Physically

My addiction has often left me exhausted and run down. Stress, poor self-care, and unhealthy patterns take a toll on my body. I may experience tension, fatigue, sleep problems, or neglect of basic needs. When my disease is active, my energy and health suffer.

Mentally

My thinking becomes distorted and repetitive. I struggle with clarity, concentration, and sound judgment. Obsession, denial, and rationalization take over, making it difficult to see situations realistically. I may feel overwhelmed, confused, or trapped in negative thinking.

Emotionally

I experience intense and unstable emotions. I may swing between anxiety, irritability, guilt,

shame, and frustration. I often react instead of respond, and I have trouble tolerating discomfort. My emotional life becomes driven by fear or desire rather than balance.

Spiritually

I feel disconnected from my values, sense of purpose, and inner peace. I may lose hope, meaning, and trust. The disease narrows my perspective and weakens my ability to live with integrity, gratitude, and humility.

Altogether, my addiction affects every part of me.

The Bigger Picture

My addiction is not limited to substances—it is a way of thinking, feeling, and behaving. While certain behaviors may stand out, the same patterns show up in many areas of my life.

My addiction often expresses itself through obsession, compulsion, and self-centeredness. Even without substances, I can become driven by control, comfort, approval, or escape. I may overwork, isolate, overthink, people-please, avoid responsibility, or seek instant relief from discomfort.

These patterns create stress, conflict, and imbalance. They affect my relationships, my health, my peace of mind, and my spiritual well-being. The form may change, but the underlying addiction remains the same.

Self-Reflection Questions

Take time to answer honestly.

A. How has my addiction affected me physically?

(Health, energy, sleep, self-care)

B. How does my thinking change when my addiction is active?

C. What emotional patterns do I notice?

(Anxiety, anger, guilt, fear, restlessness, etc.)

D. In what ways do I feel spiritually disconnected when my addiction is active?

E. What non-substance behaviors show my addictive patterns?

(Overworking, control, avoidance, people-pleasing, etc.)

F. How have these patterns affected my relationships and quality of life?

Closing Reflection

Step One helps me see that my addiction is not just about what I do—it is about how I live, think, feel, and relate to the world. When these patterns are active, every area of my life becomes affected.

Recognizing this truth is not meant to bring shame. It is meant to bring clarity. When I understand how deeply my disease touches my life, I can become more willing to seek support, practice honesty, and commit to a new way of living in recovery.

5) What specific patterns of my addiction have been showing up most recently?

How My addiction Is Showing Up Today?

Opening

Step One is not only about the past — it is about how my addiction shows up in my life right now. Recovery requires ongoing honesty and awareness. By looking at my current patterns, I can see where my thinking, emotions, and behavior are becoming unmanageable again.

This section helps me recognize how my addiction is active today so I can stay grounded, open, and willing to grow.

My Current Patterns

Most recently, my addiction has been showing up through patterns of obsession and control. I find myself getting fixated on certain thoughts, outcomes, or situations, and I have difficulty letting them go. My mind loops, I overanalyze, and I feel a strong need to manage things so I can feel okay.

I notice myself reacting instead of responding. I become impatient, easily frustrated, and emotionally driven. I may avoid uncomfortable feelings by staying busy, withdrawing, or seeking distractions. Even when no substances are involved, the same compulsive thinking and behavior are present.

These patterns affect my peace of mind and my relationships. I feel more stressed, less present, and less balanced. They show me that my disease is still active and that I need to slow down, practice awareness, and stay connected to recovery.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and without judgment.

A. What kinds of thoughts or situations do I currently become most obsessed with?

B. How does my need for control show up in my daily life?

C. When I feel uncomfortable, how do I usually try to escape or manage the feeling?

D. How are these patterns affecting my peace of mind?

E. How are my relationships or responsibilities being affected right now?

F. What are my personal warning signs that I need to slow down and refocus on recovery?

Closing Reflection

Step One teaches me that my addiction does not disappear — it changes form. By honestly looking at how it shows up today, I can stay aware and willing to grow.

Each time I recognize obsession, control, or emotional reactivity, I am given the chance to pause, ask for help, and choose recovery. Awareness keeps me connected to the path of healing, balance, and freedom.

6) *Have I become fixated on a person, place, or situation? If so, how has this affected*
How Obsession Affects My Relationships

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at how my addiction affects not only me, but also the people in my life. One of the clearest ways this shows up is through obsession. When my focus becomes narrow and intense, my relationships often suffer.

This section helps me explore how obsession changes the way I show up with others and how it impacts trust, connection, and emotional availability.

My Experience

When I become obsessed with a person, place, or thing, my focus becomes narrow and intense. I begin to invest an unhealthy amount of time, energy, and emotional importance into it.

This obsession often pulls me away from the people who matter in my life. I may become distracted, unavailable, impatient, or emotionally distant. I listen less, show up less, and become more self-focused. My priorities shift, and others may feel ignored, unimportant, or taken for granted.

I may also try to control situations or people so that the obsession is not threatened. This can create tension, resentment, and conflict. Trust and connection suffer.

These patterns show me that when my addiction is active, it limits my ability to be present, respectful, and supportive in my relationships.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. How does obsession change the way I show up in my relationships?

B. Who in my life may feel less important or less seen when I am obsessed?

C. In what ways do I become controlling, distant, or emotionally unavailable?

D. How has obsession affected trust or connection with others?

E. How does my need for control or fixation limit my ability to love and support others?

F. What would healthier balance and presence look like in my relationships?

Closing Reflection

Step One helps me see that my addiction does not only affect my inner world — it also affects how I relate to others. When obsession takes over, I lose balance, perspective, and connection.

By recognizing these patterns, I gain the opportunity to slow down, let go of control, and return to healthier, more respectful relationships. Awareness is the first step toward rebuilding trust, presence, and genuine connection.

Denial

Recognizing Denial

Opening

Step One begins with honesty. One of the greatest barriers to honesty is denial. Denial allows my disease to stay hidden, protected, and active. When I am in denial, I cannot clearly see what I am doing or how it affects my life and the people around me.

This section helps me recognize how denial works in my thinking so I can begin to see the truth about myself and my behavior.

Understanding My Denial

Denial is one of the most powerful parts of my addiction. It convinces me that I do not really have a problem, or that the problem is not that serious. When I am in denial, I stop seeing my behavior honestly.

I minimize the impact of my actions and focus on how others contribute to the situation. I blame circumstances, stress, or people around me instead of taking responsibility. I

compare myself to others and tell myself that I am not as bad, so I must be okay. I also compare my current behavior to past extremes and convince myself that what I am doing now is harmless.

I often justify my actions with explanations that sound reasonable but are not truly honest. These justifications protect my behavior and allow the disease to continue.

Recognizing denial is essential, because as long as I am denying the problem, I cannot change it.

Self-Reflection Questions

Take time to answer honestly.

A. In what ways do I minimize or downplay my behavior?

B. How do I shift blame to other people, situations, or stress instead of taking responsibility?

C. Who do I compare myself to in order to feel “not that bad”?

D. How do I compare my current behavior to past extremes to justify what I am doing now?

E. What are some justifications I use that sound reasonable but are not truly honest?

F. What truths about my behavior am I afraid to admit?

Closing Reflection

Step One teaches me that I cannot heal what I will not acknowledge. Denial keeps me stuck by protecting my addiction from the truth.

When I practice honesty — even when it is uncomfortable — I open the door to change. Every time I recognize denial and choose to see myself clearly, I take another step toward freedom, responsibility, and recovery.

7) Have I offered reasonable-sounding but untrue explanations for my behavior? What were they?

Recognizing Justification and Rationalization

Opening

Step One is built on honesty. One of the ways my addiction avoids honesty is through justification and rationalization. These are the explanations I give myself that sound reasonable, but are not fully truthful. They allow me to stay comfortable while keeping my behavior the same.

This section helps me become aware of the ways I protect my disease with excuses and distorted thinking.

Understanding My Justifications

When my addiction is active, I often create explanations that sound reasonable, but are not fully honest. These reasons help me avoid responsibility and keep my behavior unchanged.

Some of the ways this shows up include:

- Telling myself I am just stressed, tired, or overwhelmed
- Blaming other people's actions or attitudes for how I respond
- Saying I deserve this because I have been through a lot
- Convincing myself that "everyone does this," so it must be normal
- Comparing myself to others who seem worse and using that as proof that I am okay
- Believing that my intentions matter more than the impact of my actions

These justifications protect my comfort in the moment, but they prevent real growth.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and without self-judgment.

A. What excuses or explanations do I most often use to justify my behavior?

B. How do I use stress, fatigue, or emotions to avoid taking responsibility?

C. Who do I compare myself to in order to feel "not that bad"?

D. How does focusing on my intentions allow me to ignore the impact of my actions?

E. How have these justifications kept me stuck or delayed change?

F. What would greater honesty and accountability look like in my life right now?

Closing Reflection

Step One reminds me that recovery begins with truth. When I hide behind justifications, I protect my disease and block my own growth.

By recognizing my rationalizations, I give myself the chance to choose honesty, responsibility, and change. I do not need to be perfect — I only need to be willing to see myself clearly. That willingness is the foundation of recovery.

8) Have I acted compulsively on an obsession and then justified it as if it were a planned decision? When has this happened, and how have I blamed others for my actions?

Reacting First, Justifying Later

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at how my addiction shows up in my choices. One common pattern is acting first and explaining later. When this happens, I respond to urges or emotions instead of using awareness and values to guide my behavior.

This section helps me recognize how impulsive reactions and later justifications keep my disease active.

Understanding My Pattern

I often act quickly based on a strong urge or emotional reaction without really thinking it through. Afterward, instead of admitting that I acted compulsively, I explain it as if it were a thoughtful, reasonable decision.

These moments usually happen when I feel stressed, hurt, afraid, or uncomfortable. I react to relieve the feeling, then create justifications to protect myself from guilt or accountability.

I may also blame others by saying they pushed me, provoked me, or left me no choice. By focusing on what they did instead of how I chose to respond, I shift responsibility away from myself and allow the pattern to continue.

Recognizing this helps me see where I need more honesty, ownership, and willingness to change.

Self-Reflection Questions

Take time to answer honestly.

- A. What recent situations can I recall where I reacted instead of responding?**
- B. What feelings or triggers usually lead me to act impulsively?**
- C. How do I tend to explain or justify my actions afterward?**
- D. In what ways do I shift blame onto others instead of taking responsibility?**
- E. How do these patterns affect my relationships, self-respect, or recovery?**
- F. What would it look like to pause and respond more thoughtfully in these moments?**

Closing Reflection

Step One shows me that real change begins with honesty. When I act impulsively and justify my behavior afterward, I stay stuck in old patterns.

By becoming aware of this cycle, I give myself the chance to slow down, take responsibility, and choose a healthier response. Willingness to see the truth is the first step toward freedom and lasting recovery.

9) *How have I measured my addiction against others', and what happens when I stop making those comparisons? Is my addiction still serious on its own?*

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at my own experience, not someone else's. One of the ways my addiction avoids this honesty is through comparison. When I compare my addiction to others, I create distance between myself and the truth.

Comparison may sound like:

- "I wasn't as bad as them."
- "At least I never did that."
- "They're the real addicts, not me."
- "My story isn't as extreme."
- "I still function."
- "I have a job, a family, responsibilities—so it's different."

Sometimes I compare downward to minimize my problem.

Sometimes I compare upward to disqualify myself.

Either way, the result is the same: I avoid looking at my own patterns.

How Comparison Keeps Me Stuck

When I compare myself to others, I shift the focus away from my own reality. Comparison becomes a way to:

- Avoid looking at my own behaviors
- Justify continuing harmful patterns
- Postpone surrender
- Protect denial
- Focus on appearances instead of impact

The real question is not whether my story is dramatic.

The real question is: **“Is this costing me more than it’s giving me?”**

My addiction is “bad enough” when:

- It causes obsession and compulsion
- It interferes with my peace of mind
- It distorts my thinking
- It affects my relationships
- It pulls me away from honesty, balance, and connection
- It makes my life harder, not freer

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. How do I compare myself to others to minimize my addiction?

B. How do I compare myself to others to disqualify myself from recovery?

C. What patterns in my life show that my addiction is costing me something?

D. How does comparison keep me from being honest with myself?

E. If I stop comparing, what do I see about my own experience?

F. In what ways has my addiction made my life harder instead of freer?

Closing Reflection

I do not need to hit someone else's bottom to respect my own.

My pain does not have to look like anyone else's to be real.

My addiction does not have to be extreme to be destructive.

Comparison is not clarity—it is a symptom of the disease.

Recovery asks a simpler, braver question: **“Is this working for me?”**

If it isn't, I am already “bad enough.”

My recovery is valid because my suffering is valid.

10) Do I minimize my current struggles by comparing them to my life before I got clean, and am I burdened by the belief that I “should know better”?

Comparing Myself to My Past

Opening

One of the most subtle ways my addiction hides is through comparison—not to other people, but to my past. When I compare my current struggles to how bad things used to be, I can convince myself that what I am experiencing now does not really count.

This section helps me recognize how the addiction uses this kind of comparison to minimize what is happening in my life today.

Understanding the Pattern

When I compare my current experience to my past, it often sounds like:

- “At least I’m not doing what I used to do.”
- “This isn’t as bad as before.”
- “I’ve grown. I should be past this.”
- “I’m not using, so this can’t really be the addiction.”

Here, the disease uses my progress as a way to dismiss my pain.

But the truth is that the addiction evolves. What it once expressed through substances may now show up through thinking, control, relationships, perfectionism, approval-seeking, isolation, or compulsive “acceptable” behaviors. When I compare today’s patterns to yesterday’s chaos, I minimize what is happening now.

I may also feel plagued by the belief that I “should know better.” This can show up as harsh self-talk, shame, and self-blame. Instead of curiosity, I feel judgment. This is not accountability—it is self-punishment, and it often leads to secrecy, discouragement, and isolation.

Knowing better does not mean I will never struggle again. It means I now have tools and awareness I did not have before.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and with compassion.

A. How do I compare my current struggles to my past in a way that minimizes what I am feeling now?

B. What “shoulds” or harsh thoughts do I have about where I think I should be in recovery?

C. How does shame or self-judgment affect my willingness to be honest and ask for help?

D. In what ways has my addiction changed its form over time?

E. What signs tell me that my addiction is still active today, even without substances?

F. What do I truly need right now to stay well and connected to recovery?

Closing Reflection

When I compare my present struggles to my past destruction, I minimize my current pain.
When I shame myself for knowing better, I block my ability to do better.

Recovery does not ask, “Why am I like this again?”
It asks, “What do I need right now to stay well?”

The presence of the addiction does not mean failure. It means I am human, living with a condition that requires honesty, care, and ongoing attention. Awareness is not a weakness — it is a sign that recovery is working.

11) Do I believe that having enough knowledge about addiction and recovery is enough to control my behavior before it becomes unmanageable?

Knowing vs. Practicing Recovery

Opening

Step One helps me see the difference between understanding recovery and living it. One of the ways my disease hides is by convincing me that knowledge alone is enough to control my behavior. I may believe that because I understand my patterns, I no longer need to reach out for help.

This section helps me look honestly at how self-reliance and isolation can quietly replace connection and support.

Understanding the Pattern

Sometimes this shows up in thoughts like:

- “I understand my patterns now.”
- “I know what’s going on with me.”
- “I can handle this myself.”
- “I don’t need to reach out yet.”
- “It’s not serious enough to bring up.”
- “I’ll get it under control before it becomes a problem.”

On the surface, this sounds responsible. Underneath, it is often self-reliance driven by fear and pride.

Addiction is not a lack of information problem. It is a power and connection problem. When I rely only on my understanding, I stay alone with the same mind where the disease lives. And a mind in isolation will usually justify whatever it wants to do.

This often leads me to:

- Delay asking for help
- Minimize warning signs
- Negotiate with myself
- Try to manage instead of surrender
- Wait for things to get “bad enough”
- Keep struggles to myself

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. In what ways do I rely on knowledge instead of connection?

B. When have I told myself, “I’ve got this,” instead of reaching out?

C. What warning signs have I minimized or ignored recently?

D. How does keeping things to myself affect my recovery?

E. What fears or beliefs make it hard for me to ask for help?

F. Who or what could I reach out to when I feel unsure or overwhelmed?

Closing Reflection

My recovery is not measured by how much I know, but by how willing I am to ask for help when I need it. Information is not immunity. Connection, humility, and support create safety.

Knowing the path is not the same as walking it.

Each time I choose to reach out instead of handle it alone, I choose recovery.

12) Do I avoid taking action out of fear of shame, or because I am concerned about how others will see me?

Opening

Step One brings me face to face with the emotions that keep my addiction alive — especially shame and fear. These feelings do not just make me uncomfortable; they keep me stuck. When I avoid action, it is often not because I do not care, but because I am afraid of what I might see, feel, or lose if I am truly honest.

This section helps me understand how shame, fear, and avoidance hold me back — and how surrender opens the door to real change.

How Shame and Fear Keep Me Stuck

When I am afraid of shame, I may think:

- “I don’t want to see how bad this really is.”
- “If I look at it, I’ll have to deal with it.”
- “I already feel bad enough.”
- “I don’t want to confirm that I’ve messed things up again.”
- “What if I can’t fix it?”

Shame tells me, “If you face this, you will be exposed.”

So I delay, avoid, distract, minimize, or deny. But avoidance does not remove the problem — it allows it to grow quietly.

When I am afraid of what others will think, I may think:

- “They’ll judge me.”
- “They’ll be disappointed.”
- “I should be further along than this.”
- “They’ll lose respect for me.”
- “I don’t want to be a burden.”
- “I don’t want to look weak.”

Here, the disease shifts my focus from healing to image. It asks me to protect how I look instead of how I live.

The Turning Point

There is a moment when denial collapses — not just “I made a mistake,” but “I cannot manage my life the way I’ve been living it.”

At this point:

- My stories no longer work
- My justifications no longer comfort me
- My comparisons no longer protect me
- My distractions no longer numb me

I am left with the truth. This often feels like emptiness, loneliness, and failure. It is the loss of false hope before real hope is built.

This loneliness is not always about being physically alone. It is about being emotionally and spiritually disconnected. I may be surrounded by people and still feel unseen and unknown.

This place is not a dead end. It is a threshold — where control gives way to surrender, isolation gives way to connection, and illusion gives way to honesty.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer slowly and honestly.

- 1. What am I avoiding right now because I am afraid of shame or judgment?**
- 2. What thoughts come up when I consider being fully honest with someone?**
- 3. How has fear of what others think kept me silent or stuck?**
- 4. In what ways have I been protecting my image instead of my healing?**
- 5. What signs tell me that my old ways of coping are no longer working?**
- 6. What would one small step toward honesty or connection look like today?**

Closing Reflection

Avoidance is not laziness — it is pain management. When I avoid action, I am often protecting myself from feelings I do not yet believe I can survive.

Step One teaches me that I can survive them. What feels like despair is often the doorway to change. When false hope fades, real hope can begin.

This place is not a punishment. It is an invitation — to stop running, to stop pretending, and to stop doing it alone.

Here, recovery begins.

13) What turning point or crisis led me to seek recovery?

The Crisis That Brought Me Here

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at what brought me to recovery. A crisis is not always a dramatic event. Often, it is the moment when living the way I was becomes more painful than changing.

This question is not about creating a dramatic story. It is about recognizing the point where my way of living stopped working.

Understanding My Crisis

A crisis in recovery is not just what happened — it is the moment when my way of thinking, feeling, and living finally broke down.

For me, this showed up when:

- I could no longer control my behavior or my thinking
- The same painful patterns kept repeating
- I was exhausted from managing, hiding, fixing, and justifying
- My relationships felt strained, shallow, or unsafe
- My peace of mind was gone
- I felt alone, even when I wasn't physically alone
- I began to lose hope that things would ever be different

There may have been a specific event, but more deeply, it was an internal collapse of denial — the moment I realized,

“I cannot live like this anymore.”

The crisis was not my failure. It was my awakening.

Self-Reflection Questions

Take your time and answer honestly.

A. What was happening in my life when I realized something had to change?

B. What patterns were repeating that made life feel unmanageable?

C. How were my relationships, peace of mind, or self-respect being affected?

D. What did I feel inside at the moment I knew I could not go on this way?

E. What illusions, excuses, or hopes finally stopped working?

6. What truth did I finally have to admit about myself and my life?

Closing Reflection

My crisis was not the end of my life — it was the beginning of my recovery. It was the moment when pain became greater than fear, and surrender became more reasonable than control.

My healing began not when everything fell apart, but when I stopped pretending it wasn't. This moment opened the door to a new way of living.

14) What experience or situation prompted me to begin working Step One in earnest?

The Moment I Chose to Surrender

Opening

Step One moves from an idea into lived experience when I stop trying to manage my life and begin to surrender. This question asks me to look honestly at the moment when I realized that my own way was no longer working.

For many of us, this moment did not come from first getting clean — it came when we saw that abstinence alone was not enough.

Understanding My Turning Point

The situation that led me to formally work Step One often looked like:

- A return of obsession or compulsion
- Emotional or mental unmanageability
- Repeating a pattern I recognized but could not stop
- Feeling restless, irritable, or disconnected in recovery
- A relapse, near-relapse, or strong urge to act out
- Conflict or crisis in relationships
- The realization that my best thinking was still failing me

At some point, I had to admit:

“I may not be using, but my life is still being run by the addiction.”

Step One became necessary when control stopped working, knowledge stopped protecting me, willpower stopped being enough, and honesty became unavoidable.

Self-Reflection Questions

Take your time with these.

- 1. What situation or pattern showed me that my way was no longer working?**
- 2. What signs of obsession, compulsion, or emotional unmanageability were present?**
- 3. How was my recovery or daily life feeling at that time?**
- 4. What did I finally have to admit about my own ability to manage?**
- 5. What made me willing to stop controlling and start surrendering?**
- 6. How did it feel when I accepted that I needed help?**

Closing Reflection

I did not work Step One because everything was falling apart — I worked it because I finally accepted that my way was not working.

This moment of surrender is not weakness. It is clarity. It is the place where recovery stops being something I know about and becomes something I live.

Here is where healing truly begins.

15) When did I first become aware that my addiction was a problem, and how did I respond to that awareness?

When I First Knew

Opening

Step One begins long before I ever entered recovery. It begins with the first moment I knew something was wrong. This question asks me to look back at when I first recognized my addiction as a problem — and what I did, or did not do, with that awareness.

This is not about judging myself. It is about understanding how my disease and my defenses developed over time.

Understanding My First Awareness

For many of us, recognition did not come during a dramatic crisis. It came quietly, through moments like:

- When I noticed I could not stop even when I wanted to
- When I felt different from other people
- When I began hiding or justifying my behavior
- When I felt uneasy about how I was living
- When I saw patterns repeating and felt powerless to change them
- When I thought, “This isn’t normal.”

That was the first knowing.

Often, I did try to correct it. But my efforts usually looked like:

- Making promises to myself
- Creating rules and limits
- Trying to control instead of surrender
- Changing circumstances rather than behavior
- Switching substances or behaviors
- Using willpower and knowledge
- Trying to “be better” on my own

These were sincere efforts — but they were attempts to manage the disease alone.

Sometimes I did not try, or did not try fully, because:

- I was in denial
- I was afraid of being different
- I feared losing something I relied on
- I believed I could still manage
- I compared myself to others
- I felt shame or pride
- I did not want to need help

Often, part of me still believed the addiction was helping me.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer slowly and honestly.

A. When do I first remember thinking, “Something isn’t right”?

B. What signs told me my behavior or thinking was a problem?

C. What did I try to do to fix it on my own?

D. What kept me from asking for help at that time?

E. What was I afraid I would lose if I changed?

F. How did the problem grow between first awareness and real surrender?

Closing Reflection

I recognized the problem long before I accepted the solution. Awareness came before willingness. Willingness came when the pain of staying the same became greater than the fear of change.

This truth is not meant to shame me. It is meant to help me see how far I have come — and why recovery is something I must continue to choose.

Powerlessness

Understanding Powerlessness

Opening

Step One is not a theory — it is an experience. Many of us struggle with the word *powerless* because we confuse it with being weak, broken, or defective. But Step One is not saying I am powerless as a person. It is saying I am powerless over my addiction.

This section helps me understand what powerlessness truly means and why it is the beginning of freedom, not defeat.

What Powerlessness Really Means

Powerlessness means that there is a force in my life that I cannot successfully manage with willpower, intelligence, self-knowledge, or good intentions.

I can want to stop.

I can decide to stop.

I can promise to stop.

And still, when the moment comes, I do not.

That is not a moral failure — it is the nature of the disease.

The proof of powerlessness is not how dramatic my story is.

The proof is the pattern:

- I lose control once I start
- I cannot reliably stay stopped
- I return to behaviors that hurt me and others
- I act against my own values
- I repeat what I swore I would never do again
- I watch myself do it and cannot stop

This is what powerlessness looks like.

And this is where relief begins. If the problem is not a lack of character, then the solution is not more self-punishment. If the problem is a disease, then the solution is treatment, support, and a new way of living.

Admitting powerlessness is not giving up — it is giving up the illusion that I was ever in control.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer slowly and honestly.

1. In what ways have I tried to control my addiction with willpower, knowledge, or promises?

2. What patterns show me that I lose control once I start?

3. Where have I returned to behaviors I swore I would stop?

4. How has my addiction led me to act against my own values?

5. What feelings come up when I admit I am powerless over this?

6. What would it mean to stop fighting this alone?

Closing Reflection

Powerlessness is not weakness — it is clarity. When I stop pretending I can manage this on my own, I make space for something new to enter my life: honesty, connection, guidance, and grace.

Step One asks only one thing of me:

7. Am I willing to stop fighting a battle I cannot win alone?

Each honest answer moves me closer to real freedom.

16) What specifically am I powerless over?

What I Am Powerless Over

Opening

Step One becomes real when powerlessness becomes specific. I am not powerless over everything in my life. I am powerless over my addiction and the patterns it creates. This section helps me identify exactly where my control ends and where my disease begins.

Clarity here brings honesty — and honesty brings the possibility of change.

Understanding My Powerlessness

I am powerless over:

1. My addiction itself

The internal addiction that drives obsession and compulsion.

I cannot control it with knowledge.

I cannot outthink it.

I cannot manage it safely.

I cannot will it away.

2. What happens once I start

I cannot reliably predict how far I will go.

I cannot consistently stop when I intend to.

I lose moderation, proportion, and perspective.

3. The return of the obsession

I cannot prevent cravings, urges, or compulsive thinking from appearing.

I cannot guarantee that “this time will be different.”

4. The consequences while the addiction is active

I cannot use or act out without emotional, relational, or spiritual cost.

I always lose something that matters.

5. My thinking when the addiction is in control

I cannot fully trust my thinking when I am obsessed.

I rationalize, minimize, and justify.

I make decisions that go against my values.

I am powerless not because I lack strength, but because I am facing a force stronger than my self-will.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and without self-judgment.

A. What patterns show me that I lose control once I start?

B. How does obsession or compulsion take over my thinking?

- C. What happens to my judgment and values when the addiction is active?**
- D. What consequences have followed when I tried to manage it on my own?**
- E. Where have I proven that my best thinking was not enough?**
- F. What would it mean to stop fighting this alone?**

Closing Reflection

My powerlessness is proven not by one bad choice, but by a pattern I have been unable to stop on my own. Admitting this is not defeat — it is honesty.

When I stop pretending I am in control of what I cannot control, I open the door to real recovery. This is where change begins.

17) What actions have I taken while in my addiction that I would not take when focused on recovery?

What My Addiction Has Cost Me

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at what happens when my disease is in control. This is not about shame or self-punishment. It is about clarity. Seeing the cost of my addiction helps me understand why recovery matters and why I am willing to change.

This section invites me to reflect on how my actions differ when I am in recovery versus when I am acting out.

When My Addiction Is in Control

When the addiction is active, I often act in ways I would never choose in recovery. I may:

- Betray my own values
- Lie or withhold the truth
- Break promises to myself and others
- Manipulate situations to protect my behavior
- Hurt people I care about
- Neglect responsibilities
- Isolate or disappear
- Take risks I would normally avoid
- Act impulsively or recklessly
- Compromise my integrity
- Choose short-term relief over long-term well-being

I may have said things I did not mean, crossed boundaries I swore I never would, put myself or others in danger, or damaged important relationships.

These actions are not who I am. They are what the addiction does when it is in control. Addiction does not reveal my character — it hijacks it.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

- 1. What are some ways I have acted against my values while my disease was active?**
- 2. What promises to myself or others have I broken during those times?**
- 3. How have my actions affected the people I care about?**

4. What risks or behaviors would I never choose in recovery?

5. How did acting out affect my self-respect, peace of mind, or spiritual life?

6. What does remembering this cost help me commit to today?

Closing Reflection

When I am focused on recovery, I am capable of honesty, care, restraint, and connection.
When I am acting out, I become someone I do not recognize.

Remembering this is not about punishment — it is about remembering why recovery matters. Seeing the truth of what the disease costs me helps me choose a better way to live, one day at a time.

18) What actions have I taken to protect my addiction that went against my values and beliefs?

When My Addiction Violated My Values

Opening

Step One asks me to look beyond behavior and into integrity. This question takes courage because it asks me to see how my addiction has pulled me away from who I truly am.

This is not about condemning myself. It is about understanding the cost of protecting my disease and the importance of choosing honesty and recovery.

When I Protected the Addiction

To maintain my addiction, I have often:

- Lied to others and to myself
- Hidden the truth
- Manipulated situations or people
- Broken promises and commitments
- Justified harm I would never normally accept
- Chosen secrecy over honesty
- Put my needs above others' well-being
- Used people instead of relating to them
- Neglected responsibilities I value
- Compromised my morals for relief or escape
- Accepted behavior in myself I would condemn in others

I may have betrayed trust, abandoned principles, sacrificed self-respect, or acted with selfishness when I believe in care.

These actions were not my true character. They were the addiction fighting to survive.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer gently and honestly.

1. What values or principles have I violated to protect my addiction?

2. In what ways have I chosen secrecy over honesty?

- 3. How have I compromised my integrity to get relief or escape?**
- 4. How has this affected my self-respect or sense of who I am?**
- 5. What guilt, shame, or disconnection did I feel as a result?**
- 6. What values do I want to live by in recovery?**

Closing Reflection

Every time I acted against my values to maintain my addiction, I paid with guilt, shame, and disconnection. Remembering this is not about condemnation — it is about clarity.

Recovery asks me to choose honesty over secrecy and integrity over comfort. Each time I do, I come closer to the person I want to be.

19) How does my behavior and attitude change when my addiction is active? (For example, do I become self-centered, irritable, manipulative, passive, or emotionally reactive?)

How My Personality Changes When I Am Acting Out

Opening

Step One helps me see the difference between who I am in recovery and who I become when the disease is in control. This is not about labeling myself — it is about recognizing patterns.

When my addiction is active, my thoughts, emotions, and behavior shift. Seeing this clearly helps me understand why my life becomes unmanageable.

When the Addiction Is in Control

When my addiction is active, I often become:

- More self-centered
- More irritable and short-tempered
- Defensive and easily offended
- Less patient and less compassionate
- Manipulative, even in small ways
- Controlling and rigid
- Secretive and evasive
- Emotionally unavailable
- Resentful
- Self-pitying
- Argumentative or passive-aggressive
- Judgmental of others
- Impulsive and reckless
- Dishonest with myself and others
- Inconsistent and unreliable

I may also become:

- Arrogant on the outside, insecure on the inside

- Whiny and victim-oriented
- Passive when I should protect myself
- Overconfident in my thinking
- Indifferent to consequences
- Dismissive of feedback
- Resistant to help

These changes are not my true personality. They are symptoms of the addiction being in control.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and with compassion.

A. Which of these traits show up most strongly when I am acting out?

B. How do these changes affect my relationships and daily life?

C. What do I notice about my honesty, patience, or empathy during these times?

D. How does my thinking change when the addiction is active?

E. What are some signs that I am shifting from recovery into old patterns?

F. Who am I when I am grounded in recovery?

Closing Reflection

In recovery, I am capable of humility, honesty, patience, and care. When the disease is active, I become someone I do not want to be — not because I am bad, but because I am unwell.

Recognizing this difference helps me stay willing, aware, and connected to the path of recovery.

20) In what ways do I manipulate or influence others to support my addiction?

Manipulation and the Addiction

Opening

Step One asks me to look at uncomfortable truths so I can heal. One of those truths is manipulation. This is not about labeling myself as bad — it is about seeing how the addiction protects itself.

When my addiction is active, manipulation becomes a survival tool. This section helps me recognize how it shows up in my life.

How Manipulation Shows Up

I do not always manipulate consciously or with harmful intent — but I often do it effectively. To maintain my addiction, I may:

- Lie or withhold important information
- Tell half-truths
- Minimize the seriousness of my behavior
- Rationalize and justify
- Play the victim
- Shift blame
- Create confusion
- Say what people want to hear
- Make promises I cannot or do not intend to keep
- Use guilt, charm, anger, or silence to get my way
- Control the narrative so I do not have to change
- Avoid accountability through distraction or defensiveness

Sometimes manipulation sounds like:

- “You’re overreacting.”
- “It’s not that big of a deal.”
- “I’ve got it under control.”
- “I’ll stop after this.”
- “You don’t understand.”

Manipulation is not about being a bad person. It is about protecting the addiction.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and without judgment.

- A. In what ways have I used manipulation to protect my behavior?**
- B. What kinds of things do I say or do to avoid accountability?**
- C. How have half-truths or silence affected my relationships?**
- D. How do I shift blame or play the victim when I am uncomfortable?**
- E. What feelings or fears drive me to manipulate instead of be honest?**
- F. What would honesty look like in these situations?**

Closing Reflection

Every time I manipulate, I choose control over honesty. And control is the language of the disease.

Honesty is the language of recovery. Each time I tell the truth — even when it feels uncomfortable — I weaken the addiction and strengthen my freedom.

21) Have I tried to stop on my own and found that I could not, or that life without using felt too painful to maintain? What were those experiences like?

When I Tried to Stop

Opening

Step One asks me to look at experience, not opinion. Powerlessness is not proven by what I intend or what I hope — it is proven by what actually happens when I try to stop.

This section helps me look honestly at my history of trying to quit and what those attempts were really like.

What My Experience Shows

Many of us have tried to quit and found that we could not. It often looked like:

- Deciding to stop and returning anyway
- Making firm resolutions that did not last
- Being sincere and still being unable to follow through
- Watching myself do what I said I would not do
- Feeling confused and defeated by my own behavior

This is one of the clearest signs of addiction.

Even when I did stop for a time, staying stopped on my own was often painful. Without tools, support, and connection, abstinence felt like:

- Restlessness
- Irritability
- Emptiness
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Boredom
- Loneliness
- Emotional overwhelm
- A constant sense of discomfort

Those periods were often marked by white-knuckling, isolation, obsession, fear, exhaustion, and hopelessness. I felt trapped — unable to live with the addiction and unable to live without it.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and without self-judgment.

A. When have I decided to quit and then returned anyway?

B. What did my attempts to stop look like?

(Promises, rules, willpower, isolation, etc.)

C. How did I feel when I tried to stay stopped on my own?

D. What eventually led me back to old behaviors?

E. What did these experiences teach me about my ability to manage this alone?

F. What kind of support or connection might I need to stay well?

Closing Reflection

My experience shows me something important: I am not only powerless to stop — I am powerless to stay stopped on my own.

This is not a failure. It is clarity. Recovery is not about willpower or abstinence alone. It is about a new way of living, supported by honesty, connection, and help.

22) In what ways has my addiction caused harm to myself or to others?

The Harm My Addiction Has Caused

Opening

Step One asks me to look beyond what I did and into what it cost. This is not about shame — it is about truth. Seeing the real impact of my addiction helps me understand why recovery matters and why I am willing to change.

This section helps me acknowledge how my disease has affected both me and the people around me.

How I Have Been Hurt

My addiction has caused harm in my own life by:

- Damaging my physical health
- Creating constant stress, fear, and anxiety
- Eroding my self-respect
- Keeping me in shame and secrecy
- Ignoring my emotional and spiritual needs
- Leading me to unsafe or destructive choices
- Putting me in harmful situations
- Repeating painful patterns
- Sabotaging my growth and stability
- Pulling me away from my values

How Others Have Been Hurt

My addiction has also affected the people around me. I have hurt others by:

- Breaking trust
- Lying or withholding the truth
- Being unreliable
- Letting people down

- Creating chaos or insecurity
- Being emotionally unavailable
- Acting selfishly
- Manipulating or controlling
- Causing fear, confusion, or disappointment
- Neglecting relationships and responsibilities
- Saying and doing things that caused emotional pain

Some of this harm was loud and obvious. Some of it was quiet and slow. But it was real.

The harm was not always intentional — but the impact still matters.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. In what ways has my addiction harmed my physical, emotional, or spiritual well-being?

B. How has it affected my self-respect or sense of who I am?

C. Who has been hurt by my behavior, even when I did not mean to cause harm?

D. How has trust been damaged in my relationships?

E. What patterns of pain or instability have repeated in my life?

F. How does seeing this impact help me commit to recovery today?

Closing Reflection

My addiction did not only affect me — it touched every part of my life and the lives of those around me. Acknowledging this is painful, and it is also the beginning of healing.

Seeing the truth is not about blame. It is about responsibility, honesty, and the willingness to make things right.

Unmanageability

Powerlessness and Unmanageability

Opening

Step One asks me to accept two truths: that I am powerless over my addiction, and that my life has become unmanageable. These two ideas are deeply connected. Powerlessness is the cause. Unmanageability is the evidence.

This section helps me look honestly at how both my outer life and my inner world have been affected.

Understanding Unmanageability

Unmanageability shows up in two main ways: outward and inner.

Outward Unmanageability

This is what others can see. It may include:

- Conflict in relationships
- Broken trust
- Instability in work or finances
- Legal or professional consequences
- Inability to keep commitments
- Repeated crises
- Isolation from family or community

Even when these are not dramatic, they are patterns of disorder instead of balance.

Inner (Personal) Unmanageability

This is often more hidden, but just as powerful:

- Low self-worth or inflated ego
- Black-and-white thinking
- Emotional extremes
- Inability to self-soothe
- Relying on others to regulate my feelings
- Avoiding responsibility
- Fear-driven decisions
- Overreaction or emotional numbness
- Living in constant tension, resentment, or anxiety

Here, the problem is not just what happens in my life — it is how I experience my life.

I may be functioning, but I am not free.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and with compassion.

A. What signs of outward unmanageability have shown up in my life?

B. What patterns of inner unmanageability do I recognize in myself?

C. How does my emotional life become difficult or overwhelming?

D. In what ways does fear or insecurity guide my decisions?

E. How have my inner struggles affected my outer life?

F. What does it mean to admit that I am functioning but not free?

Closing Reflection

When my inner world is chaotic, my outer world eventually follows. Step One invites me to be honest about both — not to shame myself, but to begin healing.

Powerlessness is not defeat. It is clarity. And clarity is the doorway to a new way of living.

23) What does “unmanageability” look like in my own life?

Unmanageability and Legal Risk

Opening

Step One asks me to be honest about how my life becomes unmanageable when my disease is active. Unmanageability is not always visible on the outside. Often, it shows up first inside — in my thinking, emotions, and sense of peace.

This section helps me explore how unmanageability has affected both my inner life and my external safety.

Understanding Unmanageability

Unmanageability means that left to my own devices, I cannot keep my life emotionally, mentally, and spiritually stable for very long — even when nothing appears wrong on the outside.

It looks like:

- Distorted thinking and loss of perspective
- Reacting instead of responding
- Moving toward extremes instead of balance
- Seeking control instead of acceptance
- Acting from fear, ego, or urgency instead of clarity

Unmanageability is not only about chaos — it is about lack of peace. It shows up as:

- Constant mental noise and obsession

- Difficulty tolerating discomfort
- Emotional volatility or numbness
- Strained or unstable relationships
- Inconsistent behavior and broken commitments
- Repeating patterns I do not want but cannot stop
- Feeling disconnected from myself, others, and my values

Outwardly, I may function. Inwardly, I am exhausted.

Legal Risk and Consequences

This question is not only about what is on my record — it is about what could have been.

When my addiction was active, I may have:

- Broken laws I would normally respect
- Driven or functioned unsafely
- Possessed or distributed illegal substances
- Engaged in theft, fraud, or dishonesty
- Put myself in dangerous or criminal situations
- Associated with people or places that increased risk
- Ignored consequences
- Rationalized illegal behavior as necessary or harmless

Sometimes I was caught. Sometimes I was not. But each time, I accepted risks I would never take in recovery.

Legal trouble is not about luck — it is about impaired judgment driven by the disease.

Self-Reflection Question

Answer honestly and gently.

- 1. How does unmanageability show up in my thinking and emotional life?**
- 2. What risks did I take that could have led to serious consequences?**
- 3. How did addiction affect my judgment about right and wrong?**
- 4. What situations put my freedom, safety, or future at risk?**
- 5. How does remembering this strengthen my commitment to recovery?**
- 6. What does a more stable, peaceful life look like to me?**

Closing Reflection

My addiction did not only affect how I felt — it affected my safety, freedom, and future. Seeing this clearly is not about guilt. It is about truth.

Unmanageability is the gap between how I want to live and how I was living. Recovery is how I close that gap.

24) How has my addiction affected my performance or responsibilities at work or school, and how has it impacted my relationships with my family?

How My Addiction Has Affected My Life

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at how my addiction has affected every area of my life. This is not about shame or self-punishment — it is about clarity. Seeing the full impact of the disease helps me understand why change is necessary and why recovery matters.

This section invites me to examine the ways my addiction has touched my work, family, finances, health, emotions, relationships, and spiritual life.

Work and School

My addiction has interfered with my ability to be consistent, reliable, and fully present. Even when I showed up physically, I was often distracted, preoccupied, or emotionally unavailable.

It has shown up as:

- Poor concentration and motivation
- Missed deadlines and responsibilities
- Lateness, absences, or unreliability

- Declining performance
- Increased stress and anxiety
- Avoiding accountability
- Conflict with coworkers, supervisors, or instructors
- Loss of trust or credibility
- Missed opportunities

Instead of building stability, I was often just surviving.

Family and Close Relationships

My addiction affected my family through broken trust, emotional distance, and instability.

It has shown up as:

- Dishonesty or withholding the truth
- Broken promises
- Emotional unavailability
- Conflict and tension
- Fear, resentment, or disappointment
- Loss of closeness
- Being unreliable or inconsistent
- Making others feel unsafe or uncertain

Often, the harm came not only from what I did, but from what I failed to do.

Finances

My addiction interfered with my ability to manage money responsibly.

It has shown up as:

- Impulsive or irresponsible spending
- Prioritizing addiction over necessities
- Debt or financial instability
- Hiding or lying about money
- Living in constant financial stress
- Avoiding budgeting or planning
- Depending on others
- Short-term decisions with long-term consequences

Physical Health

My addiction took a toll on my body.

This has included:

- Neglecting basic self-care
- Fatigue or illness
- Sleep problems
- Poor nutrition or hygiene
- Ignoring medical needs
- Risk-taking that endangered my health

Emotional and Mental Health

Emotionally and mentally, my addiction caused instability.

It has shown up as:

- Anxiety and fear
- Depression or hopelessness
- Mood swings
- Irritability and anger
- Emotional numbness
- Obsessive thinking
- Low self-worth or inflated ego
- Difficulty coping with stress

Spiritual Life

My addiction weakened my connection to meaning, purpose, and values.

It showed up as:

- Loss of faith or hope
- Feeling empty or lost
- Acting against my principles
- Disconnection from purpose
- Replacing connection with control or escape

Isolation

My addiction separated me from others even when I was not physically alone.

It caused me to:

- Withdraw emotionally
- Hide parts of myself
- Avoid honest connection
- Push people away
- Choose secrecy over intimacy
- Live behind a mask

Denial

Denial kept my addiction alive by:

- Minimizing my behavior
- Comparing myself to others
- Blaming people or circumstances
- Believing I still had control
- Ignoring warning signs

Denial did not protect me — it delayed my recovery.

What Powerlessness Makes Possible

Admitting powerlessness opens the door to:

- Honesty
- Help
- Support
- Connection
- Growth
- Relief
- Change

It allows me to stop fighting alone and begin living differently.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. What areas of my life were most affected by my addiction?

B. How did my addiction interfere with my responsibilities and relationships?

C. In what ways did I lose peace, stability, or self-respect?

D. What patterns of denial kept me stuck?

E. What am I most ready to change now?

F. What kind of life do I want in recovery?

Closing Reflection

Step One is not about humiliation. It is about truth.

By admitting my powerlessness and unmanageability, I am not giving up — I am finally beginning.

This honesty opens the door to a new way of living, grounded in support, connection, and hope.

25) How has my addiction affected my friendships?

How My Addiction Has Affected My Friendships

Opening

Step One invites me to look honestly at how my addiction has affected the people in my life. This is not about blame or shame — it is about understanding. Seeing the truth about my friendships helps me recognize why recovery matters and how deeply connection has been impacted.

This section helps me explore how my disease has shaped the way I relate to friends.

My Experience with Friends

My addiction has interfered with my ability to be a consistent, honest, and emotionally present friend. Even when I cared deeply, my behavior often created distance, confusion, and pain.

Loss of trust

My words and actions did not always match. I lied, withheld the truth, minimized, or told partial stories to protect my addiction. Over time, trust eroded.

Inconsistency and unreliability

I canceled plans, arrived late, failed to follow through, or disappeared without explanation. Friends learned they could not rely on me.

Emotional unavailability

I listened poorly, made conversations about myself, or failed to show up during important moments. Even when present, I was distracted or distant.

One-sided relationships

I often took more than I gave, leaning on friends for support without offering the same in return.

Conflict and defensiveness

When friends expressed concern, I responded with denial, anger, blame, or withdrawal instead of honesty.

Choosing enabling relationships

I gravitated toward people who did not question my behavior and distanced myself from those who did.

Loss and isolation

Some friendships faded through neglect; others ended through conflict or repeated disappointment. Even when I had friends, I often felt alone because I was not being real.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. How has my addiction affected my ability to be honest and reliable with friends?

B. Who may have been hurt or pushed away by my behavior?

C. In what ways was I emotionally unavailable or self-focused?

D. How did denial or defensiveness show up in my friendships?

E. What friendships did I lose or damage, and how does that feel today?

F. What kind of friend do I want to be in recovery?

Closing Reflection

My addiction did not just damage individual friendships — it damaged my ability to trust connection itself. By hiding and protecting the disease, I lost the closeness I wanted most.

Recovery gives me the chance to rebuild, to show up, and to become the kind of friend I have always wanted to be.

26) Do I need to be in control or have things go my way, and how has this affected my relationships?

My Need for Control and Its Impact on Relationships

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at how my thinking and behavior affect my relationships. One of the ways my disease shows up is through a strong need to have things my way. What feels like confidence or self-protection is often fear and control in disguise.

This section helps me explore how insisting on my own way has shaped my connections with others.

How Control Shows Up

When my addiction or self-centered thinking is active, I often feel a strong need to control situations, outcomes, and people. I may believe my way is the best or only way things will work. When things do not go as I expect, I become frustrated, resentful, or emotionally reactive.

This has shown up as:

- Difficulty compromising
- Needing to be right
- Dismissing others' perspectives
- Becoming impatient or controlling
- Reacting strongly when plans change
- Withdrawing or becoming passive-aggressive
- Using guilt, pressure, or emotional reactions to influence others
- Resisting feedback or suggestions
- Confusing control with safety

Over time, this has affected my relationships. Others may have felt unheard, invalidated, pressured, emotionally unsafe, or exhausted by conflict. Even when my intentions were good, my need for control often created distance instead of connection.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and with compassion.

A. In what situations do I most insist on having my own way?

B. How do I react when things do not go as I expect?

C. How has my need for control affected the people in my life?

D. What feelings usually drive my need to control?

(Fear, insecurity, discomfort, need for safety, etc.)

E. How has control cost me closeness or trust?

F. What would it look like to choose connection over control?

Closing Reflection

My need to have things my way was often driven by fear — fear of being uncomfortable, wrong, or out of control. But control cost me closeness.

Recovery teaches me that trust and connection are safer than control. When I let go of the need to manage everything, I make space for relationships that are more balanced, respectful, and real.

27) Do I take others' needs into account, and how has failing to do so affected my relationships?

How My Self-Centeredness Affects Others

Opening

Step One invites me to look honestly at how my thinking and behavior affect the people in my life. When my addiction or self-centered thinking is active, my focus often narrows to my own needs and feelings. Even when I care about others, I may struggle to consider what they need if it conflicts with what I want.

This section helps me see how self-centeredness has shaped my relationships.

When My Focus Narrows

When my addiction is active, lack of consideration has shown up as:

- Putting my comfort or relief first
- Being emotionally unavailable
- Interrupting, dismissing, or not truly listening
- Making decisions without consulting those affected
- Expecting understanding without offering it
- Being impatient with others' feelings or boundaries
- Minimizing or invalidating others' experiences
- Assuming others should adapt to me
- Prioritizing my addiction or emotions over relationships

Over time, this behavior caused others to feel overlooked, unimportant, emotionally neglected, or taken for granted. Even without harmful intent, the impact was real.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. In what ways have I put my needs ahead of others?

B. How have I been emotionally unavailable or distracted?

C. Who in my life may have felt unheard or unimportant because of my behavior?

D. What fears or discomforts made it hard for me to consider others?

E. How has this pattern affected the closeness of my relationships?

F. What would it look like to slow down and consider others more fully?

Closing Reflection

My lack of consideration was often rooted in fear, obsession, or emotional overload. I was not choosing to be selfish — I was consumed. But intent does not erase impact.

Recovery gives me the chance to listen, adjust, and care in a more balanced way. As I become more aware of others' needs, my relationships become more respectful, honest, and connected.

28) How willing am I to take responsibility for my life and my actions, and how well do I manage my daily responsibilities without becoming overwhelmed? In what ways has this impacted my life?

Responsibility and Unmanageability

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at how my addiction and self-centered thinking have affected my ability to live responsibly. Responsibility is not just about doing tasks — it is about how I relate to my life. When my disease is active, even simple responsibilities can feel overwhelming, confusing, or threatening.

This section helps me see how avoiding responsibility has shaped my daily life and my sense of self.

How Responsibility Becomes Unmanageable

When my addiction or self-centered thinking is active, I may understand responsibility in theory but struggle to live it in practice. I often want the benefits of responsibility — stability, respect, independence — without the discomfort that comes with follow-through.

I may avoid responsibility by:

- Blaming circumstances, stress, or other people
- Making excuses or rationalizing my behavior
- Minimizing consequences
- Expecting others to pick up where I fall short
- Procrastinating or avoiding tasks
- Feeling resentful about obligations
- Believing life asks too much of me

When overwhelmed, I may:

- Avoid tasks until they become crises
- Start things but not finish
- Feel paralyzed by fear or perfectionism
- Swing between overcommitting and withdrawing
- Neglect my physical or emotional needs
- Feel exhausted even when little gets done

How This Has Affected My Life

These patterns have real consequences:

- My life feels chaotic rather than structured
- Stress and anxiety increase
- Confidence in myself decreases
- Others may feel they cannot rely on me
- Relationships become strained
- Shame, guilt, or frustration grows
- Opportunities for growth are missed

- I remain stuck in survival mode

Avoiding responsibility does not protect me — it keeps me overwhelmed and disconnected from my potential.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and with compassion.

A. What responsibilities do I most often avoid or resist?

B. How do I usually explain or justify avoiding them?

C. How has this pattern affected my stress, confidence, or relationships?

D. What fears or beliefs make responsibility feel threatening?

E. What happens when I delay or avoid taking action?

F. What would one small act of responsibility look like today?

Closing Reflection

My struggle with responsibility is not a lack of ability — it is often rooted in fear, self-doubt, and addiction-driven thinking.

Recovery teaches me that responsibility is not punishment; it is freedom. Each time I take ownership, ask for help, and follow through, I build a life that is more stable, honest, and peaceful.

29) How do I respond when things don't go as planned, and how has this reaction affected my life?

My Need for Control and Difficulty with Change

Opening

Step One invites me to look honestly at how my fear and addiction affect the way I handle life. When I rely on control, plans, or outcomes to feel safe, any change can feel like a

threat. This section helps me see how my reactions to uncertainty and disappointment have made my life more difficult.

When Things Do Not Go as Planned

When my addiction or fear-driven thinking is active, I struggle to tolerate uncertainty, change, or disappointment. I may feel safe only when things go according to my expectations. When they do not, I may:

- Panic or feel overwhelmed
- React emotionally instead of thoughtfully
- Become angry, resentful, or irritable
- Shut down or withdraw
- Blame others or circumstances
- Try to regain control through force or avoidance
- Give up when things do not go my way

This is not about the situation — it is about my need for control to feel safe.

How This Has Affected My Life

My difficulty handling change has led to:

- Increased stress and emotional exhaustion
- Strained relationships
- Missed opportunities
- Rigid problem-solving
- Living in fear of things going wrong
- Loss of confidence in my ability to cope
- A sense that life is unmanageable

Instead of responding to life, I often react to it.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and with compassion.

A. What situations trigger my need to control or panic?

B. How do I usually react when plans change or I feel disappointed?

C. How has this pattern affected my stress level and relationships?

D. What fears are underneath my need for things to go my way?

E. What happens when I try to force control instead of adapt?

F. What would it look like to pause and respond more calmly?

Closing Reflection

My need for control is rooted in fear, not strength. When I cannot adapt, I suffer. Recovery teaches me that flexibility is strength.

Each time I pause, accept what I cannot control, and trust that I can handle discomfort, my life becomes less fragile and more peaceful.

30) Do I take challenges or setbacks personally, and how has this affected my life?

Taking Things Personally

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at how my thinking affects my relationships and my peace of mind. When my addiction or fear-based thinking is active, I often experience normal challenges as personal attacks. This keeps me reactive, defensive, and disconnected from others.

This section helps me understand how taking things personally has made my life more difficult.

When Everything Feels Like an Attack

When my addiction is active, I may:

- Take feedback defensively
- Feel easily offended or hurt
- Assume negative intent
- Overreact to small problems
- Turn challenges into proof that I am being wronged
- Feel misunderstood or singled out
- Respond with anger, resentment, or withdrawal
- View disagreement as rejection

When this happens, I stop solving problems and start protecting myself.

How This Has Affected My Life

This pattern has led to:

- Increased conflict
- Difficulty accepting help
- Missed opportunities for growth
- Heightened stress
- Feeling constantly attacked
- Isolation
- Reinforcing negative beliefs about myself and others

Instead of learning from challenges, I fight them.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and with compassion.

A. When do I most often feel attacked or criticized?

B. How do I usually react when someone gives me feedback?

C. How has this defensiveness affected my relationships?

D. What fears or beliefs make me take things personally?

E. What happens when I pause instead of react?

F. How might I respond differently in recovery?

Closing Reflection

When I stop taking everything personally, I create space for growth, connection, and peace. Recovery teaches me that my worth is not determined by circumstances or other people's opinions.

Each time I respond with curiosity instead of fear, I move closer to a calmer and more balanced life.

31) Do I approach most situations as emergencies, reacting with panic rather than calm, and how has this affected my life?

Living in Crisis Mode

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at how my thinking and reactions make my life feel unmanageable. One of the clearest signs of this is living in a constant state of urgency. When my addiction or fear-based thinking is active, everything can feel like an emergency.

This section helps me see how crisis thinking has affected my peace, my choices, and my relationships.

When Everything Feels Urgent

When my addiction is active, I may:

- Assume the worst will happen
- Feel constant pressure to act immediately
- Struggle to slow down or think clearly
- Overreact to small problems
- Feel chronically stressed or on edge
- Believe everything must be handled right now
- Confuse urgency with importance
- Make impulsive decisions to relieve anxiety
- Feel unable to tolerate uncertainty

In this state, calm feels unsafe and chaos feels normal.

How This Has Affected My Life

Living in crisis mode has led to:

- Emotional exhaustion and burnout
- Poor or rushed decisions
- Increased anxiety and fear
- Strained relationships
- Creating problems that patience could have prevented
- Difficulty prioritizing what matters

- Feeling overwhelmed by daily life
- A deep sense that life is unmanageable

When everything feels like a crisis, nothing ever feels resolved.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and with compassion.

A. What kinds of situations trigger my sense of urgency or panic?

B. How do I usually act when I feel something is an emergency?

C. How has crisis thinking affected my stress, health, or relationships?

D. What fears or beliefs drive my need to react immediately?

E. What happens when I pause instead of panic?

F. What would it look like to respond one step at a time?

Closing Reflection

My crisis mentality is rooted in fear and a lack of trust — not in reality. Recovery teaches me that not every situation is an emergency.

As I learn to pause, breathe, and respond instead of panic, my life becomes calmer, more grounded, and more manageable.

32) Do I dismiss or overlook warning signs about my own health or my children's well-being, assuming that things will resolve themselves? Describe.

Avoiding Warning Signs

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at how my addiction, fear, and denial affect my ability to face reality. One of the most painful ways this shows up is when I avoid warning signs about my health or my children's well-being.

This section helps me see how avoidance has made my life — and the lives of those who depend on me — more fragile.

How Avoidance Shows Up

When my addiction or fear-based thinking is active, I may:

- Dismiss symptoms as “not that serious”
- Delay medical or professional help
- Avoid difficult conversations
- Convince myself problems will resolve on their own
- Minimize concerns raised by others
- Feel overwhelmed and choose inaction
- Fear what I might discover
- Tell myself I will deal with it “later”

In these moments, avoiding the truth feels safer than facing it.

How This Has Affected My Life and Others

Ignoring warning signs leads to:

- Worsening health issues
- Problems becoming more complicated
- Ongoing stress and anxiety
- Others feeling unsafe or unsupported
- Loss of trust

- Reinforcing the belief that I cannot handle reality

When this affects my children, the impact can be especially painful. Even unintentional avoidance can create fear, confusion, or insecurity.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and with compassion.

A. What warning signs have I ignored or delayed facing?

B. What fears kept me from taking action?

C. How did my avoidance affect my health or my children's safety?

D. How did inaction increase stress instead of reducing it?

E. What support could help me face difficult realities?

F. What would responsible care look like today?

Closing Reflection

Avoidance is not a lack of love — it is fear trying to survive. Recovery teaches me that caring means acting, even when I am afraid.

By facing reality one step at a time and asking for help, I create safety, trust, and stability for myself and for those who depend on me.

33) *Have there been times when I was in real danger but remained indifferent to it or was unable to protect myself because of my addiction? Describe.*

When My Addiction Put Me in Danger

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at how my addiction affected not only my choices, but my ability to protect myself. When the disease is active, even obvious danger can feel distant or unimportant.

This section helps me recognize how addiction interfered with my safety, boundaries, and self-worth.

How Danger Was Minimized

When my addiction was active, I may have:

- Ignored warning signs
- Minimized real threats
- Placed myself in unsafe situations
- Trusted people or environments I should not have
- Failed to leave dangerous situations
- Taken risks I would normally avoid
- Felt numb or indifferent to harm
- Believed “nothing bad will happen”
- Felt unable to act when action was needed

Even when I recognized danger, fear, denial, or obsession often kept me from responding.

How Addiction Weakened Self-Protection

Addiction narrowed my focus to relief and escape. In that state:

- My judgment was compromised
- My priorities were distorted
- My sense of self-worth was reduced
- My boundaries weakened

- My concern for my own safety declined

Sometimes I tolerated danger because I did not believe I deserved better, or did not care what happened to me.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and with compassion.

A. What unsafe situations did I tolerate or ignore while my addiction was active?

B. How did fear, denial, or obsession keep me from protecting myself?

C. What warning signs did I miss or minimize?

D. How did my sense of self-worth affect my willingness to stay safe?

E. What boundaries do I need now to protect myself?

F. Who or what can I turn to when I feel unsafe or overwhelmed?

Closing Reflection

Indifference to danger is not strength — it is a warning sign. Recovery teaches me that my life is worth protecting.

As my awareness and self-respect grow, so does my ability to choose safety, set boundaries, and ask for help. This is part of reclaiming my life.

34) *Have my actions while in addiction caused harm to someone else? Describe.*

The Harm I Have Caused Others

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at how my addiction has affected other people. This is not about shame or self-condemnation — it is about truth. Addiction does not exist in isolation. The way I thought, acted, and made decisions touched the lives of others, often in ways I did not fully see at the time.

This section helps me acknowledge that impact so I can begin to heal it.

How Others Were Affected

My addiction caused harm in many ways, including:

- Lying or withholding the truth
- Breaking trust through repeated behavior
- Being unreliable or inconsistent
- Failing to show up emotionally or physically
- Speaking in anger or defensiveness
- Manipulating or controlling
- Neglecting responsibilities
- Creating fear, instability, or confusion
- Putting my needs above others' well-being
- Making promises I could not keep

Sometimes the harm was loud and obvious. Sometimes it was quiet — erosion of trust, emotional distance, or repeated disappointment. Even when my intentions were not harmful, the impact was real.

Often the harm was not about cruelty, but about absence: absence of honesty, reliability, emotional presence, and safety.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

- A. Who may have been hurt by my addiction?**
- B. In what ways did my behavior affect their trust, safety, or well-being?**
- C. What did I fail to provide when people needed me?**
- D. How did denial keep me from seeing this harm?**
- E. What feelings come up as I acknowledge this?**
- F. What kind of person do I want to be in recovery?**

Closing Reflection

Facing the harm I caused is not about condemning myself — it is about taking responsibility and telling the truth. Avoiding this truth keeps the disease alive. Facing it opens the door to healing.

Recovery gives me the chance not only to stop causing harm, but to become someone who brings honesty, care, and integrity into the lives of others.

35) Do I respond to my emotions with outbursts or other reactions that diminish my self-respect or sense of dignity? Describe.

Emotional Reactivity and Loss of Self-Respect

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at how my emotions and reactions have affected my life. When my addiction or emotional unmanageability is active, I may feel overwhelmed by strong feelings and react in ways that do not reflect who I truly am.

This section helps me understand how emotional reactivity has damaged my self-respect and my relationships.

When My Emotions Take Over

When I am emotionally overwhelmed, I may:

- Explode in anger over small things
- Yell, swear, or speak harshly
- Act aggressively or dramatically
- Cry uncontrollably or collapse emotionally
- Threaten to leave or end relationships
- Become passive-aggressive or sarcastic
- Shut down and refuse to communicate
- Use guilt, blame, or intimidation
- Say things just to hurt or win
- Act impulsively to escape feelings

In the moment, these reactions feel unavoidable. Afterward, I often feel shame, regret, and disappointment in myself.

How This Has Affected Me and Others

These reactions have affected my self-respect:

- I don't like who I become
- My actions don't match my values
- I feel out of control
- I lose confidence in myself

They have also affected my relationships:

- Others feel unsafe or on edge
- People avoid being honest
- Emotional distance grows
- Trust is damaged

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. What kinds of situations trigger my emotional reactions?

B. How do I usually act when I feel overwhelmed?

C. How do I feel about myself after these reactions?

D. How have these reactions affected the people in my life?

E. What feelings are underneath my anger, fear, or collapse?

F. What would a calmer, more respectful response look like?

Closing Reflection

My emotional reactions are not a sign that I am bad — they are a sign that I am overwhelmed and unwell. Recovery teaches me that I can feel deeply without destroying myself or others.

As I learn to pause, ask for help, and respond with honesty, my self-respect and dignity return.

36) Did I use substances or addictive behaviors to numb, avoid, or alter my emotions, and what feelings was I trying to escape or suppress?

What I Was Trying to Change or Suppress

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at why I used or acted out — not just what I did. For many of us, addiction was not about wanting to destroy our lives. It was about trying to survive emotionally.

This section helps me see how my addiction became a way to manage feelings I did not know how to handle.

How My Addiction Managed My Emotions

My addiction became a tool to change how I felt. Instead of understanding or processing my emotions, I used substances or behaviors to make them go away as quickly as possible.

I used or acted out to:

- Numb emotional pain
- Escape uncomfortable feelings
- Relieve inner tension
- Feel something when I felt empty
- Gain temporary confidence or control
- Avoid reality
- Quiet my mind

The feelings I was trying to change or suppress often included:

- Fear and anxiety
- Shame or guilt
- Anger or resentment
- Loneliness
- Sadness or grief
- Insecurity or low self-worth
- Stress and overwhelm
- Boredom or restlessness
- Feeling powerless

Sometimes I could not even name the feeling — I only knew I could not tolerate how I felt.

The Cost of Suppressing My Feelings

Using or acting out brought temporary relief, but it did not solve anything. Over time:

- Feelings came back stronger
- Problems grew instead of shrinking
- I lost emotional awareness
- I became less able to cope
- Shame increased
- I depended more on my addiction

Avoiding my feelings gave them more power over me.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

- A. What feelings did I most often try to avoid or numb?**
- B. What situations or emotions made me want to escape?**
- C. How did using or acting out make me feel in the moment?**
- D. What happened to those feelings afterward?**
- E. What has avoiding my emotions cost me?**
- F. What feelings do I want to learn how to handle in recovery?**

Closing Reflection

My addiction was not just about pleasure or escape — it was about emotional survival. I used because I did not yet have the tools, safety, or support to feel what I was feeling.

Recovery teaches me that feelings are not emergencies. As I learn to feel without using or acting out, I gain freedom, stability, and self-respect.

Reservations

Reservations and Acceptance of My Addiction

Opening

Step One is not just about admitting that I have a problem — it is about accepting the full reality of my addiction. One of the ways the disease hides is through *reservations*: the quiet beliefs that I might still be able to control, manage, or safely keep parts of my addiction.

These reservations are not always obvious. They often live in the back of my mind as “just in case” plans. This section helps me bring them into the light.

What Are Reservations?

Reservations are the places where I secretly leave the door open to relapse. They sound like:

- “I know I can’t use like before, but maybe I can still do *this*.”
- “Some parts of the program don’t really apply to me.”
- “I can stay friends with people I used with.”
- “If something really bad happens, I’ll probably use.”
- “Once I reach a certain goal or amount of clean time, I’ll be able to control it.”

Reservations are not honesty — they are the disease looking for loopholes.

They allow me to believe I can have a little bit of addiction and still stay safe. Experience has shown me that this is not true.

Why Reservations Are Dangerous

Reservations keep me from fully surrendering. They keep one foot in recovery and one foot in the disease. Even when I am doing well, they quietly prepare a way back.

If I do not accept the full measure of my addiction, I leave myself vulnerable to returning to old patterns — not because I want to, but because I never fully closed the door.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and without self-judgment.

- A. What are some things I secretly believe I could still control?**
- B. Are there people, places, or behaviors I am still holding onto “just in case”?**
- C. Are there situations where I tell myself I would probably use or act out?**
- D. What parts of recovery do I resist or believe don’t apply to me?**
- E. What fears make it hard to fully let go of these reservations?**
- F. What would it mean to accept my addiction without conditions?**

Closing Reflection

Reservations are not about weakness — they are about fear and unfinished surrender. They are the disease trying to keep a doorway open.

Step One asks me to close that door, not with force, but with honesty. Accepting the full measure of my addiction is not a loss. It is the beginning of real freedom.

Today, I choose to let go of the illusion of control and commit to recovery without conditions.

37) Do I believe I can safely stay connected to people, places, or objects linked to my addiction, and if so, why do I think this is wise for my recovery?

People, Places, and Things

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at the places where I still leave the door open to my addiction. One of the most common ways this happens is through my beliefs about people, places, and objects connected to my past.

This section helps me see whether I am truly letting go — or still holding on in subtle ways.

How Reservations Show Up

When my addiction is active, I may tell myself I can “handle” being around certain people, places, or objects. These thoughts can sound reasonable, but they often come from the disease looking for access.

This may look like:

- Wanting to stay in contact with people I used with
- Going back to places where I used or acted out
- Keeping drugs, paraphernalia, or reminders
- Believing I can control myself around triggers
- Wanting to “test” my recovery
- Feeling nostalgic about my old life

- Wanting to prove I am different now

These are not neutral thoughts — they are hidden reservations.

Why This Is Risky

Addiction is opportunistic. Being around triggers can:

- Awaken cravings and old thinking
- Weaken boundaries
- Normalize risky behavior
- Create emotional or mental relapse
- Pull me back into familiar patterns

Even if I don't use right away, I begin moving back toward danger.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. Are there people, places, or objects I am still holding onto from my addictive past?

B. What reasons do I give myself for believing this is safe?

C. How have these things affected my recovery before?

D. What fears make it hard to let go of them?

E. What boundaries would better protect my recovery?

F. What would choosing safety over nostalgia look like today?

Closing Reflection

My recovery is not proven by how close I can stand to danger — it is proven by how seriously I protect my life.

Letting go of people, places, and things connected to my addiction is not a loss. It is an act of self-respect and survival.

38) Is there a situation or event I believe I could not face without using or acting out, and if so, what is it?

No Exceptions

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at whether I am fully committed to recovery or still holding onto quiet escape plans. One of the most dangerous reservations is the belief that there are certain things I could not survive without using or acting out.

This section helps me see whether I have truly closed the door — or left it cracked open.

The Hidden Exception

Sometimes I tell myself I can stay clean “as long as” certain things do not happen. I may believe that if life becomes painful enough, using would be understandable or necessary.

These situations might include:

- The death of someone I love
- Serious illness
- Rejection or abandonment
- Financial collapse

- Public failure
- Loneliness or heartbreak
- Trauma or loss

These become imagined exceptions — moments I think would justify relapse.

Why This Is Dangerous

Believing there are exceptions plants a future escape route. It tells the disease: “If this happens, you’re allowed to go back.”

Even if I am not planning to relapse, this weakens my commitment, increases fear, and keeps addiction as a backup plan.

This belief is not really about the event — it is about trust. It reflects a lack of trust in myself, in support, and in recovery.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. Are there situations I believe I could not survive without using or acting out?

B. What events or losses scare me the most?

C. How does this belief affect my sense of safety and commitment to recovery?

D. What support would I need if something painful happened?

E. What would it mean to trust that I can feel pain without escaping?

F. What would full commitment to recovery look like for me?

Closing Reflection

There is no event so powerful that it must destroy my recovery. Pain is not the enemy — avoidance is.

By choosing recovery with no exceptions, I choose life, connection, and the possibility of healing no matter what happens.

39) *Do I believe that with enough time, success, or changed circumstances, I could eventually control my addiction?*

Letting Go of the Fantasy of Control

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at one of the most hidden reservations of all: the belief that one day my addiction will become manageable. This belief sounds hopeful, but it keeps the door to relapse quietly open.

This section helps me examine whether I am truly accepting the nature of my disease — or still bargaining with it.

The Belief That Keeps the Door Open

Sometimes I may think:

- “After I’ve been clean long enough, I’ll be different.”
- “If my life gets better, I won’t need it.”
- “Once I reach a certain goal, I can handle it.”
- “It was only bad because of what was happening back then.”
- “This time would be different.”

These thoughts feel reassuring, but they are driven by the disease's desire to keep an option for return.

Why This Is Dangerous

Addiction is not dependent on circumstances. Even when my life improves, the disease remains. If I try to regain control, the same cycle will return: obsession, loss of control, compulsion, and consequences.

Time does not change the nature of the disease.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

- A. What thoughts do I have about someday being able to control my addiction?**
- B. What fears make it hard to accept that I cannot safely return to it?**
- C. How has trying to control it worked in the past?**
- D. What has believing "this time will be different" cost me?**
- E. What would full acceptance of my disease look like?**
- F. What kind of freedom do I want in recovery?**

Closing Reflection

The moment I believe I might one day control my addiction, I put my recovery at risk. Letting go of that belief is not loss — it is liberation.

Recovery offers me something better than control: a life of honesty, safety, and freedom.

40) *What exceptions or conditions am I still holding onto that could threaten my recovery?*

Releasing My Reservations

Opening

Step One asks me to look honestly at whether I am truly committed to recovery or still holding on to hidden conditions. Reservations are the quiet “if” and “someday” thoughts that leave the door open to return to my addiction.

This section helps me bring those hidden escape plans into the light.

How Reservations Show Up

My reservations may sound like:

- “If things get bad enough, I can always go back.”
- “Maybe one day I’ll be able to handle it.”
- “As long as I don’t go too far, it’s okay.”
- “I just won’t do it the way I used to.”
- “This doesn’t apply to me.”

- “I can still keep this one thing.”
- “I’ll quit for now.”

These thoughts weaken my commitment, even when I truly want recovery.

I may still be holding on to:

- Certain people I don’t want to let go of
- Certain places I still want to visit
- Certain behaviors I still want to justify
- The belief I might control it someday
- The idea that some pain would justify using
- The hope that time or success will change the disease

These are emotional escape routes, not harmless ideas.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. What “if” or “someday” thoughts do I notice about my addiction?

B. Are there people, places, or behaviors I am still holding onto?

C. What fears make it hard to fully let go?

D. How have reservations affected my recovery in the past?

E. What would full commitment to recovery look like?

F. What would I gain by releasing these reservations?

Closing Reflection

Reservations are not about wanting to fail — they are about being afraid to fully surrender. But every reservation I release strengthens my recovery.

Today, I choose to close the door, protect my recovery, and choose life without conditions.

Surrender

Resignation vs. Surrender

Opening

Step One asks me to make a choice—not about using, but about how I want to live. There is a profound difference between resignation and surrender.

Resignation is what happens when I know I have a problem but no longer believe anything can change. It is the belief that addiction is my fate and that I am destined to suffer this way forever.

Surrender is something entirely different. Surrender begins when I accept that Step One is true for me and become willing to see recovery as the solution. It is the moment I stop fighting reality and become open to a new way of living.

Understanding the Difference

Resignation sounds like:

- “This is just who I am.”
- “Nothing will ever really change.”
- “I’m stuck this way.”
- “I might as well give up.”

Resignation gives up on life. It keeps me trapped in hopelessness and isolation.

Surrender sounds like:

- “I can’t do this alone.”
- “My way isn’t working.”
- “I’m willing to try something different.”
- “Maybe recovery really can help me.”

Surrender does not mean weakness. It means I am finally willing to stop fighting and start healing.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

- A. In what ways have I lived in resignation before coming to recovery?**
- B. What beliefs did I have about myself or my future when I felt resigned?**
- C. What made me start questioning that hopelessness?**
- D. What does surrender mean to me right now?**
- E. What am I tired of feeling or living with?**
- F. What am I willing to try differently today?**

Closing Reflection

Resignation told me my life was over.

Surrender tells me my life can begin again.

When I accept Step One and open myself to recovery, I choose possibility over despair, connection over isolation, and change over staying stuck.

41) What fears or resistance do I have about surrender, and what experiences show me that I can no longer use successfully?

Fear and Willingness to Surrender

Opening

Step One invites me to let go of the belief that I can manage my addiction on my own. Surrender can feel frightening because it asks me to release control, certainty, and familiar ways of coping — even when those ways have not been working.

This section helps me explore both my fears about surrender and the truth of my own experience.

What I Fear About Surrender

I may be afraid of:

- Losing control
- Not knowing who I am without my addiction
- Feeling emotions I have avoided

- Facing the consequences of my past
- Depending on others
- Being vulnerable or judged
- Living without my usual coping tool
- Failing at recovery
- Feeling powerless

These fears do not mean I do not want recovery. They mean I am standing at the edge of change. **What My Experience Has Taught Me**

My own life shows me that I cannot use successfully. No matter how much I tried to control or manage it, the same cycle returned:

- Obsession
- Loss of control
- Compulsion
- Consequences

I see this in:

- Repeated failed attempts to control
- Broken promises
- Increasing consequences
- Emotional and spiritual emptiness
- Loss of peace
- Feeling trapped in the same cycle

I no longer use to feel good — I use to avoid feeling bad. And even that no longer works.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. What fears come up when I think about surrendering?

B. What have I been trying to control that isn't working?

C. How has my addiction taken more than it has given?

D. What patterns show me I cannot manage this on my own?

E. What do I truly want that addiction has not been able to give me?

F. What would willingness to try recovery look like today?

Closing Reflection

Surrender is not about losing everything — it is about finally choosing life. My addiction has shown me it cannot give me what I want. Recovery offers a new way.

I do not have to know how everything will turn out. I only need to be willing to try. That willingness is the beginning of freedom.

42) Am I willing to accept that I cannot safely return to controlled use, even after long periods of abstinence?

Letting Go of the Dream of Control

Opening

Step One asks me to face a hard truth: my addiction does not disappear with time. Even when I am clean, the disease remains ready to return if I try to control it again. This is not meant to scare me — it is meant to set me free.

This section helps me examine whether I am still holding onto the hope that someday I will be able to use or act out safely.

The Thoughts That Keep the Door Open

When I struggle with this truth, I may think:

- “Maybe someday I’ll be different.”

- “I just need more time.”
- “Other people can do it — why not me?”
- “It was only bad because of what was happening back then.”

These thoughts feel hopeful, but they are echoes of denial and bargaining.

What My Experience Shows

Each time I tried to return to control, the same pattern followed:

- Obsession returned
- Limits disappeared
- Compulsion took over
- Consequences followed

Even after long periods of abstinence, the disease did not change. The problem was not time — it was the nature of my addiction.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. What thoughts do I have about someday being able to control my addiction?

B. What happened when I tried to manage or test myself in the past?

C. How did obsession and compulsion return?

D. What did those attempts cost me?

E. What fears make it hard to let go of this fantasy?

F. What would it mean to choose safety instead of testing myself?

Closing Reflection

Letting go of the dream of control is not a loss — it is the beginning of peace. I no longer have to experiment, bargain, or prove anything.

By choosing abstinence and full commitment to recovery, I choose a life that is safer, steadier, and free.

43) I can begin to talk about recovery without surrender, but I cannot truly live in recovery without it.

The Difference Between Trying and Surrendering

Opening

Step One teaches me that I may be able to start recovery without full surrender — but I cannot stay in recovery without it. At first, I might read, attend meetings, or make changes while still holding onto control. Part of me may believe I can manage the disease on my own or return to old ways if things become uncomfortable.

This section helps me see why surrender, not just effort, is what allows recovery to last.

When I Am Only Partly Surrendered

Without full surrender, I may:

- Hold on to reservations
- Bargain with the future
- Follow only the parts of recovery I like
- Resist guidance or support
- Keep escape plans
- Try to control instead of trust

This creates an inner conflict — one foot in recovery and one foot in addiction.

As long as I believe my way might still work, I will return to it when I feel afraid, overwhelmed, or uncomfortable. The disease uses this hesitation to take back control.

Surrender is not about perfection. It is about honesty and willingness.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. In what ways have I tried to hold onto control while in recovery?

B. What reservations or escape plans do I still notice?

C. How has partial surrender affected my peace or stability?

D. What fears make it hard to fully let go?

E. What would it look like to trust recovery instead of myself alone?

F. What am I willing to try differently today?

Closing Reflection

Complete surrender does not mean I have no fear or questions. It means I am willing to stop arguing with the truth of my experience.

Recovery does not require certainty — it requires willingness. And surrender is the doorway to that willingness.

44) What might my life look like if I fully surrendered to recovery?

What Complete Surrender Would Mean for Me

Opening

Step One invites me to imagine a different way of living — one based not on control, fear, or escape, but on honesty, support, and willingness. Complete surrender does not mean giving up on life. It means giving up the struggle to manage my addiction on my own and beginning to trust recovery as my way forward.

This section helps me explore what surrender could look like in my daily life.

What Surrender Would Feel Like

With full surrender, my life would likely feel:

- More peaceful, even when things are not perfect
- More honest, because I am no longer hiding
- More stable, because I am not constantly reacting
- More connected, because I allow others to know the real me
- More hopeful, because I am no longer stuck in the past
- More grounded, because I accept what I cannot control

I would still feel pain, fear, and uncertainty — but I would no longer face them alone or try to escape them.

How I Would Change

With surrender, I would begin to:

- Ask for help without shame
- Follow guidance instead of relying only on myself
- Let go of old patterns and behaviors
- Respond instead of react
- Build consistency into my life
- Choose honesty even when it's uncomfortable
- Protect my recovery as a priority

Surrender does not remove challenges — it changes how I meet them.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. What would I be letting go of if I fully surrendered?

B. What parts of my life would feel safer or more peaceful?

C. What fears come up when I imagine living without escape plans?

D. How might my relationships change with more honesty and openness?

E. What kind of person do I want to become in recovery?

F. What is one way I can practice surrender today?

Closing Reflection

Surrender is not the end of my life — it is the beginning of the life I have been trying to reach all along.

When I stop fighting reality and start trusting recovery, I open myself to peace, connection, and a future that is no longer ruled by fear.

45) Is full surrender necessary for me to continue in recovery?

Why Surrender Is Necessary

Opening

Step One reminds me that I may be able to stay involved in recovery activities for a time without fully surrendering, but I cannot continue to grow or remain free from the disease without it. Surrender is what allows recovery to become real and lasting.

This section helps me look honestly at where I may still be holding on to control and why letting go is essential.

What Happens Without Full Surrender

Without complete surrender, I may:

- Hold on to control
- Keep escape plans
- Bargain with the future
- Follow only the parts of recovery that feel comfortable
- Resist guidance or accountability
- Rely on my own thinking even when it has already failed me

This creates an inner conflict — part of me wants recovery, and part of me still protects the disease.

Why Surrender Matters

As long as I believe I can manage on my own, I will return to old patterns when I feel afraid, overwhelmed, or uncomfortable. Partial surrender allows the addiction to stay alive in the background.

Surrender is not weakness — it is honesty.

Self-Reflection Questions

- 1. In what ways am I still trying to control my recovery?**
- 2. What escape plans or reservations do I notice?**
- 3. When I feel afraid or overwhelmed, what do I usually turn to?**
- 4. How has relying only on my own thinking worked for me?**
- 5. What might I gain if I stopped fighting reality?**
- 6. What does surrender mean to me today?**

Closing Reflection

I do not need to know how everything will work out. I only need to be willing to let go.

Surrender is not the end — it is the beginning of a life built on honesty, connection, and peace.

Spiritual principles

Practicing Honesty

Opening

Step One is built on honesty, open-mindedness, willingness, humility, and acceptance. Honesty begins the moment I admit the truth about my addiction and continues in how I live each day. Saying “I’m an addict” may be the first honest thing I have said in a long time — and it opens the door to a new way of living.

This section helps me look at whether I am being honest not just about my past, but about what is happening inside me right now.

Why Sharing Matters

When I keep thoughts of using or acting out to myself, the addiction grows stronger. Secrecy gives addiction space to hide and convince me I am alone. Sharing with a sponsor or someone I trust breaks that isolation and weakens the power of obsession.

Honesty is not about being judged — it is about staying well.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and without self-judgment.

- A. Have I had thoughts of using, acting out, or escaping recently?**
- B. Did I share those thoughts with my sponsor or someone I trust? If not, why not?**
- C. What fears or beliefs make it hard for me to be honest?**
- D. What happens when I keep these thoughts to myself?**
- E. How might sharing change how I feel or think?**
- F. Who can I reach out to when I need support and honesty?**

Closing Reflection

Honesty is the foundation of my recovery. When I speak the truth about what I am thinking and feeling, I step out of isolation and into connection. Each honest moment strengthens my recovery and brings me closer to freedom.

46) Have I remained aware of the reality of my addiction, regardless of how long I've been free from active use?

Staying in Touch With the Reality of My Addiction

Opening

Step One asks me to live in truth, not fear. Freedom from active addiction does not mean my disease is gone—it means it is being managed through honesty, awareness, and

connection. The behaviors may stop, but the thinking patterns that once drove them can return quietly if I am not paying attention.

This section helps me stay grounded in the reality that recovery is not something I finish—it is something I live.

How I Drift From Reality

When I lose touch with the truth about my addiction, I may notice warning signs such as:

- Minimizing my past: “It wasn’t that bad.”
- Comparing myself to others to feel different or better
- Isolating or pulling away from support
- Skipping recovery practices that once helped me
- Feeling restless, irritable, or disconnected
- Blaming others instead of looking within
- Believing I deserve a break from recovery

These are not failures—they are signals that I need to reconnect.

What Staying in Touch Looks Like

Staying grounded in reality means:

- Remembering that obsession and compulsion can return in new forms
- Accepting that time does not equal immunity
- Staying honest, teachable, and humble
- Remaining connected to people who speak truth to me
- Practicing recovery even when I feel fine
- Asking for help instead of trying to manage alone

I do not recover once. I recover every day.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and without judgment.

A. Where have I become complacent in my recovery?

B. What recovery tools or habits have I let go of?

C. What warning signs show up when I begin to drift?

D. Who helps me stay honest about my disease?

E. What does staying connected look like for me today?

F. What daily actions help protect my recovery?

G. What does humility look like in my life right now?

Closing Reflection

Freedom from active addiction is a gift—not a cure. When I stay honest, connected, and humble, my recovery stays strong. Living in truth protects the life I am building, one day at a time.

47) Have I noticed that now that I no longer have to hide my addiction, I don't need to lie the way I once did? Do I truly appreciate the freedom that comes with that? In what ways have I begun to live more honestly in my recovery?

Honesty and Open-Mindedness

Opening

Step One begins with two powerful principles: **honesty** and **open-mindedness**. In active addiction, dishonesty often became a way of life. I lied to protect my behavior, avoid consequences, and hide from myself and others. Over time, those lies created fear, shame, and isolation.

Recovery offers something different. It offers the freedom to live in truth. When I practice honesty, I no longer have to hide or pretend. When I practice open-mindedness, I become willing to believe that a different way of living is possible—even if I don't yet understand how.

This section invites me to look at how honesty and open-mindedness are shaping my recovery today.

What Honesty Looks Like in My Recovery

Today, honesty shows up when I:

- Admit when I am struggling
- Ask for help instead of isolating
- Take responsibility without excuses
- Share my feelings instead of hiding them
- Tell the truth even when I'm afraid
- Let go of secrets
- Act in ways that match my values

Each honest choice weakens the addiction and strengthens my freedom.

What Open-Mindedness Means

Open-mindedness means being willing to try a new way of living—even when it feels unfamiliar or uncomfortable. I do not have to understand everything. I only have to be willing to experiment with recovery instead of limiting myself with old thinking.

When I stop dismissing new ideas and begin giving them an honest try, I create space for growth, healing, and change.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and without judgment.

- A. How did lying and secrecy support my addiction?**
- B. In what ways did I lie to myself?**
- C. What fears come up when I think about being fully honest?**
- D. Where in my life am I practicing honesty today?**
- E. What areas still feel difficult to be truthful about?**
- F. How does honesty strengthen my recovery?**
- G. What does being open-minded look like for me right now?**
- H. What new ideas or suggestions am I willing to try?**

Closing Reflection

Honesty frees me from the weight of hiding. Open-mindedness frees me from the limits of my past thinking. Together, they create the foundation for a new way of life—one built on truth, connection, and possibility.

Each time I choose honesty and openness, I move one step closer to the life recovery promises.

48) What ideas or suggestions have I heard in recovery that I struggle to believe or understand? Have I been willing to ask my sponsor or the person who shared them to help explain what they mean for me?

Staying Open to a New Way of Living

Opening

Recovery often introduces ideas that challenge the way I have always thought. Some of these ideas may sound strange, unrealistic, or uncomfortable. They may feel too simple, too spiritual, or too different from what I am used to. My first reaction might be skepticism, resistance, or dismissal.

But this reaction is not new. It is the same thinking that once kept me stuck. My discomfort is not proof that something is wrong—it is often a sign that I am being invited to grow.

Step One asks me not to have all the answers, but to be willing to explore new possibilities.

What Open-Mindedness Means

Open-mindedness does not mean I must instantly agree with everything I hear. It means I am willing to listen, ask questions, and consider that a different way of living might work better than the one that led me here.

Ideas like surrender, trusting a Higher Power, asking for help, letting go of control, making amends, and forgiveness may feel unfamiliar. But recovery asks me to live differently than I did in addiction.

The question is not whether I believe everything—it is whether I am willing to try.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and without judgment.

A. What recovery ideas have I struggled to believe or accept?

B. What feelings come up when I hear these ideas? (Fear, anger, confusion, resistance, curiosity, etc.)

C. Do I tend to reject new ideas quickly, or do I ask for clarification?

D. Who can I talk to when I don't understand something?

E. What would it look like for me to stay open, even when I feel unsure?

F. What is one idea I am willing to explore instead of dismiss?

Closing Reflection

I do not have to understand everything right now. I only have to remain willing. Each time I choose curiosity over resistance, I create space for healing, growth, and a new way of living.

49) Where in my life am I choosing openness over old thinking, and how am I practicing open-mindedness today?

Open-Mindedness and Willingness in Action

Opening

In Step One, recovery begins not with certainty, but with openness. Open-mindedness means being willing to consider new ideas, try new actions, and learn from the results—even when they feel unfamiliar or uncomfortable. Willingness means I show that openness through what I do, not just what I think.

My old ways of thinking led me to addiction. Recovery asks me to experiment with a new way of living.

What Open-Mindedness Looks Like

I practice open-mindedness when I:

- Listen without immediately judging
- Ask questions instead of assuming
- Try suggestions even when I don't feel like it
- Accept that growth can feel uncomfortable
- Let go of needing to be right
- Stay willing even when I don't have the full picture
- Allow my understanding of spirituality to evolve
- Learn from feedback instead of defending
- Keep showing up even when I have doubts

These actions create space for healing.

What Willingness Looks Like

Willingness is not a feeling—it is something I show. I practice it when I:

- Go to meetings
- Reach out for support
- Ask for help
- Do the next right thing
- Follow suggestions

- Stay engaged even when I feel unsure

Each small action says, *“I am open to change.”*

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

- A. Where have I recently dismissed a recovery idea without really trying it?**
- B. What suggestions have helped me even though I didn’t believe in them at first?**
- C. When I resist new ideas, what am I afraid will happen?**
- D. Who do I trust enough to ask, “Can you help me understand this?”**
- E. What is one suggestion I can try this week with an open mind?**
- F. What small action can I take today to support my recovery?**

Closing Reflection

I do not have to know everything to move forward. Open-mindedness and willingness are enough. Each time I listen, ask, try, and show up, I step further into the life recovery is offering me.

50) Am I truly willing to trust and act on the guidance my sponsor offers?

Willingness to Follow Direction

Opening

Step One invites me to practice humility by being willing to take guidance. My sponsor is not here to control me, but to share experience from someone who has walked this path. When I resist their direction, it is often because something in me feels threatened—my pride, fear, or need for control.

Recovery asks me to trust something other than my old thinking.

Why Willingness Matters

In active addiction, I relied on my own thinking even when it hurt me. In recovery, I learn to test a new way of living. Following direction is not blind obedience—it is willingness to try something different when my way did not work.

Resistance may sound like:

- “They don’t understand my situation.”
- “That won’t help.”
- “I’ll do it later.”
- “I already know that.”

Willingness asks me to pause and ask:

Am I protecting my recovery—or my ego?

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. What directions from my sponsor do I resist most?

B. What fears or beliefs come up when I’m asked to do something uncomfortable?

C. When I have followed my sponsor’s guidance, what were the results?

D. Where am I still trying to control the process?

E. What would willingness look like for me right now?

F. What is one action I can take today to practice humility?

Closing Reflection

Each time I choose willingness over resistance, I strengthen my recovery. I do not have to understand everything to move forward—I only need to be willing to try.

51) Am I committed to showing up to meetings on a consistent basis?

Willingness to Show Up

Opening

Willingness to attend meetings is one of the foundations of my recovery. Meetings are not just a place to sit and listen—they are a place to stay connected to people who understand me, reflect truth back to me, and remind me that I am not alone. When I stop going, I don't just miss a meeting—I drift away from the support that keeps me grounded.

Step One asks me to choose connection over isolation, even when I don't feel like it.

How Resistance Shows Up

My resistance to meetings may sound like:

- “I'm too busy.”
- “I don't feel like it today.”
- “I already know what they're going to say.”
- “I can handle things on my own.”

These thoughts feel reasonable, but they often come from the same thinking that once kept me stuck and alone. Willingness is not waiting to feel motivated—it is showing up anyway.

Why Meetings Matter

When I go to meetings:

- I remember where I came from
- I hear truth from people who understand
- I feel less alone
- I stay connected to recovery
- I strengthen hope and stability

Even when nothing dramatic happens, something inside me shifts. I leave more grounded, more honest, and more connected.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and without judgment.

- A. What excuses do I make when I don't want to go to a meeting?**
- B. How do I usually feel after I attend compared to when I skip?**
- C. What has regular meeting attendance given me?**
- D. What fears or beliefs get in the way of showing up?**
- E. What would commitment to meetings look like for me right now?**
- 6. What is one meeting I am willing to commit to this week?**

Closing Reflection

Willingness is not about perfection—it is about consistency. Each time I show up, I choose connection over isolation and strengthen the life I am building in recovery.

52) How committed am I to giving my recovery my best effort, and how is that showing up in my life?

Giving My Recovery My Best Effort

Opening

Step One invites me to make recovery the foundation of my life. Willingness to give my recovery my best effort means choosing it as a daily priority—not something I do only when it is convenient or when I feel afraid of losing what I have. Recovery is not a side project; it is what supports everything else in my life.

Giving my best does not mean being perfect. It means being honest, present, and willing to keep showing up, even when it is uncomfortable.

What Best Effort Looks Like

I give my recovery my best effort when I:

- Make meetings a priority
- Follow my sponsor's guidance
- Work the Steps honestly
- Reach out instead of isolating
- Practice honesty, humility, and open-mindedness
- Take responsibility for my growth
- Use recovery tools when I am stressed, angry, or afraid
- Stay connected through service and fellowship

These actions build a life that is stable, honest, and free.

Where I May Still Be Holding Back

Sometimes my resistance shows up as:

- Procrastinating on step work or commitments
- Choosing comfort over growth
- Keeping secrets
- Believing I can manage alone
- Waiting to feel “ready” instead of taking action

These are not failures—they are places where more willingness is needed.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. Where in my recovery am I fully committed?

B. Where am I still hesitant or holding back?

C. What fears come up when I think about giving my full effort?

D. How has my life changed when I truly showed up for recovery?

E. What is one action I can take today to give my recovery my best?

F. What does humility look like for me right now?

Closing Reflection

Humility is the heart of Step One. It means accepting who I truly am and being willing to live differently. Each time I give my recovery my best effort, I choose honesty, connection, and freedom—one day at a time.

53) Do I see myself as someone who has caused irreparable harm through my addiction, or as someone whose actions had no real impact on others? Where do I fall between these two extremes?

Finding the Truth Between Shame and Denial

Opening

Step One invites me to see myself honestly — not through the lens of crushing shame or comfortable denial, but through truth. When I am caught in shame, I reduce myself to my worst actions and forget that I am more than my past. When I minimize, I avoid responsibility and block growth.

Both extremes keep me stuck. Recovery asks me to find the balanced truth in between.

Two Ways I Can Distort the Truth

When I am in **shame**, I may:

- See myself as broken or unworthy
- Replay my mistakes endlessly
- Believe I have ruined everything
- Feel hopeless and isolated

When I am in **minimization**, I may:

- Downplay the impact of my addiction
- Tell myself it didn't really hurt anyone
- Avoid accountability
- Protect myself from discomfort

Neither of these is the full truth.

The Balanced Truth

The truth is:

- My addiction affected people, relationships, and my life
- I am responsible for the harm I caused
- I am not my disease
- I am worthy of healing, growth, and change

Holding both responsibility and self-compassion allows me to make amends, practice humility, and move forward.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. When I think about my past, do I lean more toward shame or minimization?

B. How does that way of thinking affect my recovery today?

C. What harms am I willing to acknowledge without punishing myself?

D. What does a balanced, truthful view of myself look like right now?

E. How can I take responsibility in a way that supports healing instead of shame?

Closing Reflection

I am not defined by my worst moments, and I am not free from responsibility for them. In recovery, I can hold both truths: I caused harm, and I am capable of change. That balance gives me the freedom to grow, heal, and live with integrity.

54) Do I have a healthy, realistic understanding of my place and importance among my family and friends, and within society as a whole?

Finding My True Place Among Others

Opening

Step One invites me to see myself honestly—not as more important than others, and not as less than them. Addiction often distorted how I saw myself, swinging me between feeling superior and feeling invisible. Recovery asks me to find a healthy, balanced view of my place in the world.

This section helps me explore what it means to matter without needing to be the center.

Two Ways My View Can Become Distorted

When I feel **more important than others**, I may:

- Expect my needs to come first
- Become controlling or resentful
- Struggle when others don't agree with me
- Feel entitled to special treatment

When I feel **less important than others**, I may:

- Believe I don't matter
- Withdraw or isolate
- Avoid responsibility
- Feel ashamed or invisible

Neither of these reflects the truth.

The Balanced Truth

A healthy sense of my relative importance means:

- I matter
- My actions have impact
- I am part of something larger
- Others matter just as much as I do

In recovery, this balance helps me treat myself with respect while honoring the dignity and needs of others.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. Do I tend to feel more important than others, less important, or swing between both?

B. How does this way of seeing myself affect my relationships?

C. What happens when I believe I don't matter?

D. What happens when I believe I matter more than others?

E. What would a balanced, healthy view of myself look like?

F. How can I practice humility and self-respect at the same time?

Closing Reflection

I have value, and so do others. I am not the center of the world—but I am an important part of it. This balanced truth allows me to live with humility, connection, and purpose as I continue my recovery.

55) *In what ways am I living out the principle of humility while working the First Step?*

Humility and Acceptance

Opening

Step One invites me to see myself clearly and kindly. Practicing humility means I no longer have to pretend I am more than I am—or less than I am. It is the willingness to accept the truth about my addiction, my limitations, and my need for help.

Acceptance takes this honesty deeper. It allows the truth to reach my heart, not just my mind. When I stop fighting reality, I make space for peace, growth, and hope.

What Humility Looks Like in Step One

Humility shows up when I:

- Admit I am powerless over my addiction
- Accept that my life became unmanageable
- Let go of the belief that I can fix this alone
- Take responsibility without excuses
- Ask for help
- Listen instead of defending
- Follow suggestions even when they challenge my pride
- Stay open to learning and change

Humility allows me to be real instead of perfect.

What Acceptance Brings

When I practice acceptance:

- I stop arguing with the truth
- I let go of wishing I were someone else
- I begin to make peace with my story
- I see recovery as a gift, not a punishment
- I treat meetings, step work, and sponsorship as tools for living
- I feel less fear and more hope

Acceptance does not make life easy—but it makes it honest and livable.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. Where do I still struggle to accept the truth about my addiction?

B. How do I see myself when I am not being humble?

C. What fears come up when I think about needing help?

D. What has acceptance given me so far in my recovery?

E. Where in my life am I still fighting reality instead of accepting it?

F. What would it look like to treat my recovery as a gift instead of a burden?

Closing Reflection

Humility keeps me teachable. Acceptance keeps me at peace. Together, they allow Step One to become more than words—they become a way of living. As I let go of resistance and embrace the truth, I step into a life that is honest, grounded, and full of possibility.

56) Have I truly accepted my identity as an addict and stopped fighting that reality?

Making Peace With Who I Am

Opening

Step One asks me to stop fighting reality and begin living in truth. Making peace with being an addict does not mean giving up on myself or reducing my entire identity to my disease. It means accepting this part of my life with honesty, without shame, denial, or resentment.

When I stop arguing with who I am, I create space for healing, stability, and freedom.

What Making Peace Means

Making peace means:

- I accept my addiction as a condition that requires care
- I stop comparing myself to others
- I let go of “Why me?” and “This shouldn’t be my story”
- I no longer bargain with or minimize the truth
- I see recovery as a path to freedom, not punishment
- I recognize that I am human, not broken

The more I accept who I am, the less power the addiction has over me.

Signs That I Am Making Peace

When I am at peace with this truth:

- I feel less ashamed of my past

- I no longer need to hide
- I accept that I need support
- I feel grateful for recovery
- I stop wishing I were someone else
- I live more honestly

Peace does not mean I never struggle. It means I no longer fight the truth of my condition.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. In what ways have I been fighting or resisting the truth about my addiction?

B. What fears come up when I think about fully accepting who I am?

C. How does accepting my addiction change how I see recovery?

D. Where do I still feel shame or resentment about my story?

E. What would it look like to treat myself with compassion instead of judgment?

F. What does making peace with myself mean today?

Closing Reflection

Making peace with who I am does not trap me—it frees me. When I accept the truth of my condition with honesty and humility, I open the door to growth, connection, and a life that is no longer ruled by shame or denial.

57) Have I come to terms with the routines and commitments that support my clean time?

Making Peace With the Recovery Lifestyle

Opening

Step One invites me to look honestly at whether I am still resisting recovery or beginning to accept it as a necessary and meaningful way of living. In early recovery, meetings, sponsorship, step work, prayer, writing, service, and honest communication may have felt like restrictions or punishments. But making peace means learning to see these actions as what gives me life, not what takes it away.

Recovery is not a phase — it is the way I stay healthy, connected, and free.

Signs I May Still Be Resisting

When I have not yet made peace, I may notice:

- Resentment toward meetings or step work
- Comparing myself to people who “don’t need” recovery
- Wanting an easier or different path
- Skipping recovery actions when I feel good
- Seeing recovery as a burden

These are not failures — they are signals that acceptance is still growing.

Signs I Am Making Peace

When I begin to accept recovery as my way of life:

- I see recovery as protection, not punishment
- I feel grateful for the tools that keep me clean
- I understand that consistency brings freedom
- I feel less resistant and more willing
- I recognize that this way of living allows me to be fully present

Making peace does not mean I love every task — it means I stop fighting the path that keeps me free.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

A. What parts of recovery do I still resist or resent?

B. When I feel good, do I tend to relax my recovery efforts?

C. How has recovery given me more than it has taken away?

D. What fears come up when I think about living this way long-term?

E. What would it look like to treat recovery as daily care instead of a burden?

F. What is one recovery action I am grateful for today?

Closing Reflection

I am not losing anything by choosing recovery — I am gaining a life. When I make peace with this way of living, I stop fighting what keeps me free and begin to walk this path with gratitude, willingness, and hope.

58) *In what ways is accepting my addiction a foundation for maintaining my recovery?*

Acceptance as the Foundation

Opening

Step One teaches me that acceptance is the ground my recovery stands on. Without acceptance, I am still fighting reality. I may understand my addiction in my head, but if I do not accept it in my heart, I will resist the very actions that keep me well.

Accepting my addiction does not limit me — it protects me. It allows me to live honestly, stay connected, and build a life that is real and free.

What Acceptance Means

When I accept my addiction:

- I stop trying to prove I am different, cured, or able to manage alone
- I recognize addiction as a condition that requires daily care
- I stay honest about my thinking and behavior
- I remain connected to support
- I let go of shame and self-blame
- I stay willing to learn, grow, and change

Acceptance keeps me grounded in truth instead of denial.

Self-Reflection Questions

Answer honestly and gently.

- A. What does acceptance of my addiction mean to me today?**
- B. Where do I still resist the reality of my addiction?**
- C. How does acceptance protect my recovery?**
- D. What happens when I forget that I need support and tools?**
- E. How has accepting my addiction reduced shame or isolation?**
- F. What have I learned about myself through working Step One?**

Closing Reflection

Acceptance is not weakness — it is strength. By accepting the truth about my addiction, I give myself the chance to live honestly, stay connected, and move forward with hope. Step One has laid the foundation. I am now ready to continue my journey in recovery.

59) What signs show me that it's time to take the next step?

How Do I Know When It's Time to Move On?

Opening

As I prepare to move forward in my recovery, it is natural to wonder whether I have done “enough.” I may question if I truly understand this step, if I should stay where I feel safe, or if I am ready to continue. Wanting certainty is human — but recovery does not grow through certainty. It grows through willingness.

Being ready to move on does not mean I feel completely confident. It means I have been honest, I have done my best, and I am willing to keep going even if I still feel unsure.

What Readiness Looks Like

I may be ready to move on when:

- I understand the spiritual principle of this step
- I have been honest and thorough in my work
- I can see how this step has changed my thinking or behavior
- I feel more open than resistant
- I am no longer using the step to delay growth
- My sponsor or trusted members support my progress

Staying on a step out of fear is not the same as working it deeply. Moving forward does not mean I lose what I have learned — it means I bring it with me.

Self-Reflection Questions

Write honestly and gently.

- A. What have I learned about myself through Step One?**
- B. How has this step changed my thinking, honesty, or behavior?**
- C. Am I staying here because I am still learning — or because I am afraid to move on?**
- D. What fears come up when I think about going to the next step?**
- E. What signs show me that I have done my best with Step One?**
- F. What would it look like to trust myself and take the next right step?**

Closing Reflection

I do not need to be perfect to move forward. I only need to be willing. Step One has given me honesty, clarity, and a foundation for recovery. I carry that foundation with me as I continue to grow.

Moving on is not leaving something behind —
it is building on what I have learned.

60) *What is my personal understanding of Step One?*

Understanding What Step One Means to Me

Opening

Step One is the foundation of my recovery. It asks me to face the truth about my life, my addiction, and my need for help. It is not just an admission that I used or acted out — it is a deep acknowledgment that my attempts to control my addiction and my life did not work.

To me, Step One means accepting that I am powerless over my addiction and that when I tried to manage it on my own, my life became unmanageable. Powerlessness does not mean weakness — it means honesty. It means recognizing that once my disease is active, I lose the ability to consistently make healthy choices on my own.

Unmanageability is not just about chaos or crisis. It shows up in my thinking, emotions, relationships, and behavior. Even when things looked fine on the outside, inside I felt restless, disconnected, and trapped in patterns I could not stop repeating. Step One helps me see that my life was not guided by clarity and freedom, but by obsession, compulsion, and fear.

Step One also teaches me humility. I no longer have to pretend I can fix myself through willpower alone. I accept that I need support, guidance, and connection to recover. This step invites me to stop fighting reality and begin working with it.

Most importantly, Step One opens the door to hope. By admitting I cannot do this alone, I make space for something new to enter my life. I am no longer trapped in the belief that I

must control everything. Step One allows me to begin again — with honesty, willingness, and trust.

Self-Reflection Questions

Take time to write honestly about each question.

- 1. What does being powerless over my addiction mean in my own words?**
- 2. In what ways has my life become unmanageable, even when it looked fine on the outside?**
- 3. How have obsession, fear, or compulsion shaped my thoughts or behavior?**
- 4. Where have my attempts to control my addiction or my life failed?**
- 5. How does admitting I need help challenge my pride or fear?**
- 6. What does humility look like for me today?**
- 7. What kind of life am I hoping recovery will help me build?**

Closing Reflection

Step One is not about shame — it is about truth.

By admitting my powerlessness and unmanageability, I am not giving up. I am finally being honest about what has not worked and opening myself to something new.

Today, I do not have to face this alone.

Through Step One, I give myself permission to heal, to grow, and to begin again with honesty, willingness, and hope.

61) In what ways has what I already knew or experienced shaped my approach to this step?

How My Past Shapes My Step One & Preparing to Move Forward

Opening

My prior knowledge and life experience shape how I approach this step—both in helpful and limiting ways. Everything I have learned, believed, and lived through becomes a lens through which I view recovery. Sometimes that lens brings insight and understanding. Other times, it creates resistance, fear, or false confidence.

In some ways, my experience helps me. I may already recognize patterns in myself. I may see how my behavior affected others. I may know from past attempts that willpower alone was not enough. These experiences can make me more honest, more open, and more willing.

At the same time, my past can also hold me back. I may think, *“I already tried this,” “I know how this works,”* or *“This won’t help me.”* I may compare myself to others or believe my situation is unique. These beliefs can quietly close me off to the full power of this step.

Sometimes fear shows up—fear of failing again, fear of disappointment, or fear of letting go of control. Other times pride shows up—believing I already know what I need or that I shouldn’t have to rely on others. Both can limit my willingness.

This step invites me to hold my past lightly. I do not have to erase it—but I do not have to be ruled by it. I can respect what I've learned while staying open to something new.

Self-Reflection Questions

Take time to write honestly.

- 1. What past experiences help me be more open to recovery?**
- 2. What beliefs or assumptions make me resistant or guarded?**
- 3. Where do I rely too much on what I think I already know?**
- 4. How have fear or pride affected my willingness to fully engage?**
- 5. What would it look like to approach Step One with fresh eyes?**
- 6. What am I willing to release so something new can grow?**

Looking Ahead to Step Two

We have come to a place where we can see clearly where our old way of life led us. We recognize that what we were doing was not working, and we accept that something new is needed.

Right now, freedom from active addiction may feel like enough. Peace and stability may feel miraculous. But over time, we may notice a space where substances or compulsive behaviors once lived. That space is meant to be filled—not with addiction—but with meaning, connection, and purpose.

Recovery is not just about stopping what harmed us.
It is about building a life that supports us.

Step Two is the doorway to that new life.

It invites us to believe that change is possible—and that help can come from beyond our own willpower.

Closing Reflection

If you have reached this point, you have already done something brave.

You chose to pause.

You chose to look honestly.

You chose to stop running.

That is not weakness.

That is courage.

You do not need all the answers to keep going.

You only need willingness.

Whatever you discovered in this step, let it be a beginning—not a judgment.

You are allowed to ask for help.

You are allowed to grow at your own pace.

You are allowed to start again.

You are not broken.

You are not alone.

You are becoming.

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This Step One guide is offered completely free so that anyone who needs it can begin. The remaining 11 steps will follow, each designed in the same structured format to help support continued growth, honesty, and long-term recovery.

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kokopenace147879@outlook.com

This guide is offered in the spirit of service, with the hope that it helps you begin — or return to — a path of honesty, clarity, and freedom.

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