

Twelve Step Journals: Step One

“We admitted that we were powerless over (our addiction) and that our lives had become unmanageable.”

Step one lists. – Ella Badham

“Step work is designed to unearth your complete history of use and abuse. Inventories are a great way to work the steps.” There are three types of lists that we can write to help us with this process.

In this journal I will be discussion the abuse of alcohol consumption and the effects it can have on somebody as this hit close to home.

1. Consequence list, “The easiest way to break through the fog of addiction is to create a list of consequences related to the behaviour.”
 - Alcohol damages your physical and mental health in many ways.
 - Alcohol is a depressant.
 - You can damage yourself financially.
 - You can loose people around you that you love and care about due to the damaging effects that it has on them
 - You can become co-dependent on alcohol which then becomes very hard to get out of.
 - It reduces your productivity in general.
2. Powerlessness list, “Go for as many examples of your powerlessness over your addictive behaviour as possible. Be as fearlessly honest as you can, starting with early examples and ending with the most recent. (A note on “Powerlessness” this is used to exemplify the cravings in an alcoholic [or any addict] that are so intense that the ability to resist is almost impossible. Once an alcoholic takes a drink, a chemical reaction occurs within that body, setting off an intense craving for more.)”
 - One drink is never enough, once one drink has been drank the ability to stop after that one is so difficult and can result in drinking excessively.
 - The fear of missing out can be extremely hard to resist and can make us feel powerlessness.
 - Not being able to go a few days without a drink
 - Not being able to go through something stressful without resorting to Alcohol.
3. Unmanageability list, “Write out the ways in which your addiction has created chaos and destruction in your life.”
 - By loosing a job and leaving one in a financially difficult state
 - Loosing a relationship due to addiction and pain caused by it
 - Causing stress and worry upon loved ones.
 - feeling intense guilt causing panic attacks
 - inability to complete simples tasks such as showering, completing assignments, getting out of bed.

1. What does addiction mean to me?

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To me, addiction is something that is a very scary word, it has caused my family much suffering, I believe that addiction is something that is not the persons fault, addiction can creep up on you at any point in your life, sometimes so slowly you do not even realise it is happening, addiction to me is co-dependency.

2. How has my addiction affected me physically? Mentally? Spiritually? Emotionally? Financially?

Addiction has affected me by leaving me unable to physically complete tasks that should be easy, such as getting out of bed. Addiction has affected me mentally by boosting my anxiety. Addiction has affected me spiritually by losing a strong connection with God. Addiction had affected me emotionally by making me feel depressed and guilty. Addiction has affected me financially by causing me to waste money that could be used on more beneficial things such as saving for a apartment.

3. How does the self-centred part of my addiction affect my life and the life of those around me?

I think that addiction can cause us to be self-centred without even realising, I think that this effects people around you as you are actively in addiction and this often causes upset and distress to those around you, however when you are addicted this is hard as although you can feel guilty about the way you are making others feel, it is really hard to get out of.

4. Have I blamed other people for my behaviour?

For example, if you grew up around other addicts, whether this be your parents or others, it can be perhaps a partial reason for your addiction as this behaviour was normalised to you from a very young age so yes.

5. Have I compared my addiction with other people's addictions?

This is something that I have witnessed a lot, this is actually so common. Often when people are in the mist of addiction, they look for anything to blame their addiction on or shift the focus to something or someone else, for example, when someone is confronting a alcoholic on there addictive tendencies I think it is common for them to say something like "well this friend is drinking more than me" even though I am not drinking as much as them, we both have a issue.

6. What does unmanageability mean to me?

Unmanageability to me is the consequences of our addictive tendencies, when we are in active addiction and it is hard to stop, the consequences of these tendencies can often seem unmanageable.

7. What troubles have been caused because of my addiction?

There is much more bad than good, some of the troubles being things such as upsetting those around me, becoming physically and mentally unhealthy.

8. Have I used my addiction to change or suppress my feelings?

I think addicts often struggle when going through distressing situations, for example, there addiction will be enhanced in order to change or supress feelings in distressing situations so yes.

9. What reservations am I still holding onto?

I am not too sure what this means, I am assuming it means what things am I still holding onto that keep me in addiction so an example would be, the thought of going on holiday with my friends.

10. Do I accept that I'll never regain "control" over my addiction, even after a long period without use?

Yes, I think that one of the hardest things to accept was the fact that once you are addicted to something, this is a chemical reaction that often lives within us forever, for example after a long period without use, a addict may think that they are able to have alcohol in moderation, however as this is a addiction we may not have as much control over this than we think.

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11. What could my life be like if I surrendered completely?

I watched a very interesting video on this topic actually, before becoming sober many people have a lot of those "what is" moments like "what if I loose my friends" and the truth is, the only things that you will loose insobriety are things that are no good for you. I think if I surrendered completely, I would be more physically and mentally healthy and I will be surrounded with better resources to cope with my emotions, such as therapy or exercise.

12. Am I WILLING: to follow a sponsor's direction, go to meetings regularly and give recovery my best effort?

Yes, I think the first step in recovery is to realise that you are an addict and to want to help yourself.

13. Have I made peace with the fact that I'm addicted and that I'll have to do things to stay clean?

Yes, I think that realising that you are a addict is something that is really hard to come to terms with, but like what I said, the first step is the realisation that you are an addict and then you can work on ways to stay clean.