

Introduction

The purpose of this workbook is to provide a framework for studying the Gamblers Anonymous 12 steps of Recovery and Unity in both individual and group settings. In order to create that framework, Gamblers Anonymous members have compiled portions of several pieces of existing literature in order to provide a comprehensive overview of what our literature has to say on each of the 12 steps and the principles upon which they are based.

This workbook begins with several reproductions from the GA (yellow) Combo Book. It begins with the 12 steps of Recovery, followed by the 12 steps of Unity, then the "Twenty Questions" along with page 17, found on the back cover. The GA Combo Book is used in all meetings of Gamblers of Anonymous and the material on these pages is the foundation of the Gamblers Anonymous fellowship.

Following the material from the Combo Book, comes portions of A New Beginning, also known as the Gamblers Anonymous "Red Book," and Sharing Recovery Through Gamblers Anonymous, also known as the Gamblers Anonymous "Blue Book." The material included in this workbook seeks to introduce some of the underlying principles driving the steps of Unity and Recovery for the purposes of encouraging step study. Each of these books, along with several other pieces of Gamblers Anonymous literature concerning the steps, can be obtained from either a Gamblers Anonymous group or the Gamblers Anonymous International Service Office.

In order to encourage ease of study, the workbook was structured as follows:

Each section includes an explanation of a Unity Step, with material from the GA "Red" Book, an explanation of a Recovery step, with material from the GA "Blue Book" and a series of questions for individual and group discussion extracted from the Gamblers Anonymous Working The Steps Pamphlet. (The Pamphlet, like the GA "Red" and "Blue" books is available as a separate piece of literature from the Gamblers Anonymous International Service Office.

When necessary, some minor changes have been made in the extracted text in order to either make the reading easier or correct grammatical mistakes. The original text has not been altered to correct either content or meaning.

Bear in mind that this workbook is one tool among many which can help one gain a better understanding of the steps. Continued reading of GA literature, personal reflection and above all, *meetings*, will only deepen the understanding for the compulsive gambler who is seeking a better way of life. Remember, recovery is a journey, not a destination.

Step Study Workbook

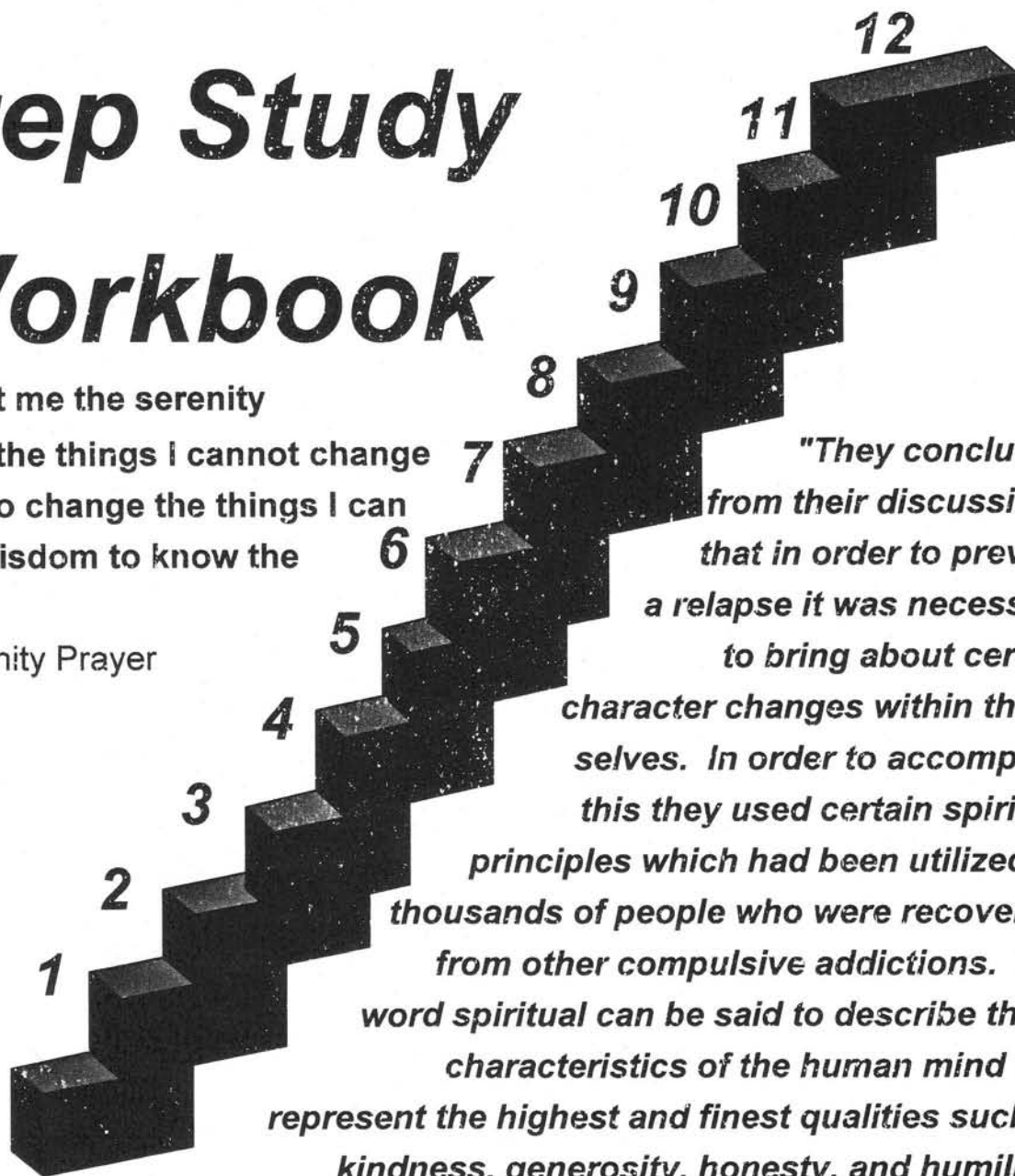
God grant me the serenity

to accept the things I cannot change

Courage to change the things I can

And the wisdom to know the
difference

...the Serenity Prayer



"They concluded from their discussions that in order to prevent a relapse it was necessary to bring about certain character changes within themselves. In order to accomplish this they used certain spiritual principles which had been utilized by thousands of people who were recovering from other compulsive addictions. The word spiritual can be said to describe those characteristics of the human mind that represent the highest and finest qualities such as kindness, generosity, honesty, and humility."

GA Combo Book

"Compulsive gambling is a learned, inadequate response to life." Recovery Step 7, GA Red Book

***This book is the personal
property of:***

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About this Step Study Workbook

Gamblers Anonymous volunteers helped assemble this workbook to assist groups and members who wish to further study the 12 Steps of Unity and Recovery.

Materials have been reproduced from the GA *Combo Book*, GA Red Book (*A New Beginning*), GA Blue Book (*Sharing Recovery Through Gamblers Anonymous*) and the GA Yellow Handbook (*The Gamblers Anonymous Step Meeting Handbook*).

In some cases, slight edits have been made to facilitate ease of reading within a group setting. In other instances, edits have been made to remove typos from original materials or to correct grammar within sentences or paragraphs. In no cases have any changes been made that effect content or meaning.

We urge you to use this book as a tool to better understand the Steps. Remember, you need not be individually “working” a particular Step to learn more about that Step. Advance knowledge of any Step can be of great value as you personally reach that point in the process.

And as for more experienced members who have previously worked the Steps? We encourage all members to continue their understanding of the Recovery and Unity Steps. Remember, ***recovery is a journey, not a destination.***

Best wishes as you begin, or continue your journey.

The Recovery Program

Here are the steps which are a program of recovery.

- 1. We admitted that we were powerless over gambling—that our lives had become unmanageable.**
- 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living.**
- 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of this Power of our own understanding.**
- 4. Made a searching and fearless moral and financial inventory of ourselves.**
- 5. Admitted to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**
- 6. We were entirely ready to have these defects of character removed.**
- 7. Humbly asked God (of our understanding) to remove our shortcomings.**
- 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.**
- 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when do so would injure them or others.**
- 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.**
- 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**
- 12. Having made an effort to practice these principles in all our affairs, we tried to carry this message to other compulsive gamblers.**

The Unity Program

In order to maintain unity our experience has shown that:

1. **Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon group unity.**
2. **Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern**
3. **The only requirement for Gamblers Anonymous membership is a desire to stop gambling.**
4. **Each group should be self-governing except in matters affecting other groups or Gamblers Anonymous as a whole.**
5. **Gamblers Anonymous has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive gambler who still suffers.**
6. **Gamblers Anonymous ought never endorse, finance or lend the Gamblers Anonymous name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.**
7. **Every Gamblers Anonymous Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.**
8. **Gamblers Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.**
9. **Gamblers Anonymous, as such ought never be organized; but may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.**
10. **Gamblers Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the Gamblers Anonymous name ought never be drawn into public controversy.**
11. **Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films and television.**
12. **Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of the Gamblers Anonymous program, every reminding us to place principles before personalities.**

Twenty Questions

1. Did you ever lose time from work or school due to gambling?
2. Has gambling ever made your home life unhappy?
3. Did gambling affect your reputation?
4. Have you ever felt remorse after gambling?
5. Did you ever gamble to get money with which to pay debts or otherwise solve financial difficulties?
6. Did gambling cause a decrease in your ambition or efficiency?
7. After losing did you feel you must return as soon as possible and win back your losses?
8. After a win did you have a strong urge to return and win more?
9. Did you often gamble until your last dollar was gone?
10. Did you ever borrow to finance your gambling?
11. Have you ever sold anything to finance gambling?
12. Were you reluctant to use "gambling money" for normal expenditures?
13. Did gambling make you careless of the welfare of yourself or your family?
14. Did you ever gamble longer than you had planned?
15. Have you ever gambled to escape worry or trouble?
16. Have you ever committed, or considered committing an illegal act to finance gambling?
17. Did gambling cause you to have difficulty in sleeping?
18. Do arguments, disappointments or frustrations create within you an urge to gamble?
19. Did you ever have an urge to celebrate any good fortune by a few hours of gambling?
20. Have you ever considered self-destruction or suicide as a result of your gambling?

Most compulsive gamblers will answer yes to at least seven of these questions.

**Page 17 (inside back cover) of the GA
Combo Book**

**TO ALL GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS MEMBERS, PARTICULARLY
THE NEW GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS MEMBERS:**

1. Attend as many meetings as possible, but at least one full meeting per week. **MEETINGS MAKE IT.**
2. Telephone other members as often as possible between meetings. Use the telephone list.
3. Don't test or tempt yourself. Don't associate with acquaintances who gamble. Don't go in or near gambling establishments. **DON'T GAMBLE FOR ANYTHING.** This includes the stock market, tickets, raffle tickets, flipping a coin or entering the office sport pool.
4. Live the Gamblers Anonymous Program **ONE DAY AT A TIME.** Don't try to solve all your problems at once.
5. Read the **RECOVERY** and **UNITY** steps often and continually review the Twenty Questions. Follow the steps in your daily affairs. These steps are the basis for the entire Gamblers Anonymous Program and practicing them is the key to your growth. If you have any questions, ask them of your Trusted Servants and Sponsors.
6. When you are ready, the Trusted Servants will conduct a Pressure Relief Group meeting, or re-evaluation for you and your spouse (if married), and adherence to it will aid in your recovery.
7. Be patient! The days and weeks will pass soon enough and as you continue to attend meetings and abstain from gambling, your recovery will really accelerate.

An Overview of the Recovery Steps

The Gamblers Anonymous Recovery Program is the foundation upon which those in the fellowship are able to rebuild their lives. The Recovery Program is outlined in twelve steps and is a plan for a better way of living.

For compulsive gamblers to be fully productive members of society they must completely abstain from gambling. By practicing the Twelve Steps of Recovery, the individual is freed to fulfill his or her potential. This program also enables Gamblers Anonymous members to lead ethical lives and attain self-respect.

Some of the twelve steps deal with the admission of powerlessness and wrongdoing. Other steps ask members to take the action necessary to rebuild their lives. A third group of steps is spiritual in nature and is concerned with a Power greater than the individual.

Each step is open to individual interpretation. Because the Recovery Program is designed to be adapted to personal needs, many different interpretations of the steps have arisen over the years. The commentary that follows is a basic overview of many different interpretations of the Twelve Steps of Recovery and can be considered as a starting point for more detailed discussion.

TWELVE STEPS OF UNITY

Unity – Something that is complete within itself, with an oneness of purpose of thought and spirit.

For the compulsive gambler who walks through the door out of a want and need to stop gambling and with a desire to become a member of Gamblers Anonymous, it often seems to be a tremendous task simply to stop gambling and restore oneself to a normal way of thinking and living. In the beginning there is an understanding confusion of the mind and the normal impatience. We try to open our minds to listen to others who have experienced the first steps of recovery.

The new member often blocks out any discussion of the Unity Program for a period of time, and even those members who have abstained from gambling for longer periods often avoid or put aside the need for discussion and acceptance of the Unity Program. But the truth of the matter is that there is a great need for an understanding of the progress of our recovery made possible by the tools that are available to us in the Steps of Unity.

The Gamblers Anonymous Unity Program is a framework for the well being of individual groups and the Fellowship as a whole. The Unity Program is outlined in the Twelve Steps and is meant to ensure the continuity and perpetuity* of Gamblers Anonymous.

In order to maintain the Fellowship for present and future members, both individuals and groups should follow the proven concepts upon which the Unity Program is based. The essence of this program is in the preservation of common welfare; members understand that what is best for the group is best for each individual.

The Unity Program serves to protect the Fellowship from disruption. Members work together under the principles of unity in order to preserve and perpetuate the opportunity for themselves and other compulsive gamblers to recover and grow within the Fellowship.

* perpetuity- (per pe tu' a tee)- perpetual: existence forever

End of Introduction

Beginning of Step One

Unity Step 1 from the Red Book

STEP 1

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon Group unity.

Our common welfare is based upon the desire to stop gambling and to solve our common problem. Personal recovery depends upon this common goal. When one maintains abstinence from gambling, we improve our quality of life. We then see that our common good is primary as we recover individually in unity with each other. A Group that is troubled due to personality conflicts, indifference to others, individual ambitions, super egos, compulsive talkers, disruptive members and others who openly indicate that Group unity is not essential, will certainly be unable to carry our message, and in time the Group will cease effectively to exist.

Gambling can shatter and perhaps destroy the gambler but an individual who gambles cannot destroy the Group. In the early days, we wondered if the Group could survive the many individual relapses. Today, we know the Group will survive.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Blue Book Step 1

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

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

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

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

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Red Book Step 1

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

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

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

Those members who have difficulty with admitting their powerlessness over gambling should write about their gambling, the destruction their gambling has caused and their countless futile attempts to stop gambling. Use the "20 Questions" as a guide. Write extensively, thoroughly and specifically using each of the

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

questions as a central focal point. Only with the awareness and acceptance of the hopelessness, helplessness and desperation of our situation (as compulsive gamblers) can we develop the open-mindedness required for Step Two.

*Suggestions for discussion on this step from
The Yellow Step Study Guide*

STEP 1

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

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

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

Discuss:

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

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

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

Discuss:

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

(Yellow Step Study - continued)

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

Discuss:

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

Our failings brought us to G.A. By admitting and accepting our problem we become willing to listen and remain open-minded.

Discuss:

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

End of Step One

Beginning of Step Two

Unity Step 2 from the Red Book

STEP 2

**Our leaders are but trusted servants;
they do not govern.**

Gamblers Anonymous relies primarily on Group conscience to keep functioning. Leaders within the Fellowship are entrusted to carry out the will and conscience of the Group. They have assigned responsibilities but they act only within the authority granted to them by the Group to serve the Group.

We shall be held responsible if we elect irresponsible Trusted Servants who cannot serve the Group in the manner determined by the "Ultimate Authority" which is the spiritual concept of "Group Conscience." They are not elected to command, order, demand, change, alter, but simply to serve and express the opinions determined by the Group through a conscious consideration of opinions expressed by all members of that Group. Trusted Servants in each Group are rotated, so that each of us may be reminded and remember that we serve for the good of all, without authority over anyone.

Ego and pride tend to become lost if one listens to the Group conscience. Acceptance is the spirit and trait which can carry one through.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Blue Book Step 2

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living.

Recognizing the nature of the compulsive gambling illness, members realize that alone they are powerless to establish a normal way of thinking and living. Therefore, compulsive gamblers understand that they need help from a power greater than themselves. In Step Two members are asked to believe in a Higher Power, which is a source of strength external to oneself and greater than one's self-will and self-determination. The Higher Power can be anything a member wants it to be, such as God or the psychological and emotional support from the Fellowship or the group. This step does not ask for belief in any organized religion but, more simply, a commitment to personal spirituality. Belief in a Higher Power enables the compulsive gambler to realize that a better way of thinking and living is possible than that offered by gambling.

**From the Red Book
Step 2**

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living.

Having been convinced of our powerlessness over gambling and the unmanageability of our lives in Step One, we are now told that only a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living. (This means we can't do it by ourselves.) At this point, we must begin to develop open-mindedness. For only by beginning to be open-minded, can we start to understand the true meaning of this step. Most, if not all of our members have found a resistance or a reluctance to deal with a Higher Power. The idea of a Power greater than ourselves restoring us to a normal way of thinking and living does not come easily to us. However, if we truly believe that we are powerless over gambling and have an illness that will progressively destroy our lives, then we desperately need a solution to our illness.

In this step, we are told that there is a solution. Our solution is living a spiritual recovery program. This Spiritual Recovery Program is brought about by a progressive character change that cannot be accomplished through will power. We need a source of power that is greater than ourselves to bring about this change. The change will take place by proceeding with the work required in the remaining steps. What will come from the work is an understanding and practice of kindness, generosity, honesty and humility within ourselves and with others which will lead us eventually to a belief in a Power of our own understanding.

How many of us had to examine why we refused to believe in a Power greater than ourselves. We found that some of the obstacles preventing us from attempting to believe were pride, ego, fear, self-centeredness, defiance, and grandiosity. In order to recover from our illness, these obstacles must be eliminated. Here, our sponsors can be of assistance. They can share with us their experience as to how they overcame their resistance to believe in a Higher Power.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

We found that writing about our resistance is a good method to help us. We had to put on paper how the obstacles blocked us and led us to refuse to accept a Higher Power.

Most of us did not fully understand what this Higher Power was. At this point, it was only necessary to accept that there was one. Many of us used our sponsor or other members of the Fellowship as the Higher Power. But eventually as we proceeded with the work required in these steps, we came to believe in this honesty to look at our illness, the open-mindedness to accept the solution before us and the willingness to apply this solution by proceeding on with the recovery process of these steps.

*Suggestions for discussion on this step from
The Yellow Step Study Guide*

STEP 2

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living.

Step Two warns that belief (Higher Power will remove obsession) may be difficult.

- 1. Many do not believe a Higher Power and/or God exists.**
- 2. How can we proceed with our recovery?**

Discuss:

- A. Areas of success in our lives that were decided more by circumstances than by our best efforts.**
- B. Fear of failure. Give up too easily?**
- C. Uncomfortable chores that proved to be beneficial.**

It is recommended that all believers and non-believers “Take It Easy.”

- 1. Keep an open mind.**
- 2. Practice other areas of the Recovery Program.**

Discuss:

- A. Meaning of the slogan “Easy Does It.”**
- B. Changes in our lives and behavior since we stopped gambling. Good? Bad? Surprised?**

Step Two recommends that we stop fighting the thought that a Higher Power may exist.

- 1. Working other areas of the GA program will show results.**
- 2. It is understood that past efforts at belief may have failed.**

(Yellow Step Study- continued)

Discuss:

- A. Judgments we make quickly.**
- B. Judgments we make on instinct (gut feeling) versus facts.**
- C. Arguing with others to win our point of view.**
- D. Catastrophes that occurred because we spoke too quickly.**

Step Two promises when we have “cleaned house” our Higher Power will enter to expel our gambling obsession.

- 1. Open-mindedness alone is required.**
- 2. Belief in open-mindedness is the plateau where all GA members can unite.**

Discuss:

- A. Have we started to listen more and voice our views less? When did this begin?**
- B. Are we open-minded or fixed in our beliefs? Why?**
- C. Step One of the Recovery Program.**

End of Step Two

Beginning of Step Three

Unity Step 3 from the Red Book

STEP 3

The only requirement for Gamblers Anonymous membership is a desire to stop gambling.

Regardless of who a person is, or how grave their emotional, legal or financial complications may be, Gamblers Anonymous welcomes anyone who demonstrates a desire to stop gambling.

For membership, it is not necessary that one pay dues or sign a pledge. Those who have returned to gambling are especially encouraged to attend meetings and get help because it is the desire to stop gambling – not the abstinence – that is required for membership.

Expressing a desire to stop gambling doesn't always mean that the member can overcome the strong urge to gamble, but nevertheless, it is the desire that is the requirement.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Blue Book Step 3

**Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of
this Power of our own understanding.**

Once members commit their lives to the care of a Higher Power, a great burden is lifted from their shoulders. Free from the limitations of ego, members try to live by the ideals of the power greater than themselves. Faith alone does not lead to a normal way of living, but faith coupled with the positive decision to commit oneself to the care of a Higher Power can lead the member toward recovery.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Red Book Step 3

**Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of
this Power of our own understanding.**

In Step One we found we were powerless over gambling – our lives became completely unmanagable, then in Step Two we found that help was available. Ask yourself if you want help and you will realize that you certainly need help or you would not have come to Gamblers Anonymous. If you are going to arrest this illness, you need all the help you can get, so keep an open mind and get going on Step Three.

What must be done? At the beginning just, to be willing to make the decision so that later you can turn your will and your life over to your Higher Power; this willingness is the action asked for in Step Three. At this point you may protest, “I don’t believe in God and, therefore, this step cannot be worked.” It can be worked if you realize that Gamblers Anonymous is a spiritual, not a religious, fellowship. With an open mind, you start to realize that you are no longer a loner; indeed, through Gamblers Anonymous we are bound together. We are truly part of one another. This spiritual binding cannot be explained, so it seems a Higher Power is at work.

When gambling ceases, a door closes on the past horrors that you survived. A visit to the past sometimes brings remorse and self-pity, two deadly pitfalls for compulsive gamblers. As the door to the past life closes, the door to a new life opens. There was no faith or hope and now there is. You can see that Gamblers Anonymous is working. Then you progress to the Recovery Program and eventually to Step Three.

As you develop the program, things happen which seem to be coincidences, but are they? A hopeless case stops gambling, a member out of work a long time gets a job and even the ultimate happens- an insane member gets back his sanity. Coincidences? You do good things and good things happen.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

Coping with each day's happiness and unhappiness is becoming slowly and surely a way of life. You must not gamble today and you will become better than you have ever been. Progress may be slow but you are grateful in learning what spirituality really is. Love of money is a major problem when most people come to the program, but money seems to fall into its proper place. It is nothing more than an aid toward a beautiful way of life; no longer is money an end unto itself. No longer are material objects the only aim and ambition. One can't buy health, humility, self-worth, self-esteem, happiness and all the other fundamentals of a serene and contented way of life. These rewards must be earned.

A Higher Power and you walking side by side can work together each day so that you can become better than you have ever been. Accept this as the fruits of a master plan. Learn anonymity and other healthy parts of a sound spiritual life. By asking your Higher Power to help you get through the day without making a bet, you will get the help you are seeking. That is the essence of Step Three.

How? Honestly, open-mindedness and willingness. This old formula will work for you as it has for so many others. No longer will you be lonely. No longer do you make the decisions. Life has a balance which it has lacked. In a crowd or by yourself, you are no longer alone.

*Suggestions for discussion on this step from
The Yellow Step Study Guide*

STEP 3

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of this Power of our own understanding.

Step Three asks us to complete the surrender started in Step One and decide to turn over our will to the care of a Higher Power.

1. This opens the door to the Recovery Program.
2. We will receive the full benefit of the program by more effectively working the remaining nine steps in order-avoiding a jump to Step Twelve.

Discuss:

- A. Have we already begun this surrender by coming to GA?
- B. What does our admission to being a compulsive gambler represent?

Surrender is difficult because:

1. Our independence is challenged.
2. We don't know how to surrender.

Discuss:

- A. How we tried to prove to ourselves and others that we could gamble, excuses we made for losing, and time spent practicing gambling.
- B. Pick one that best represents your independence.

Blaming	No trust	Withdrawing
Being Smug, Superior	I know myself	Material success
Judging, Moralizing	Minimizing	Dislike criticism
Analyzing	Defiance	Other _____
Debating, Arguing	Attacking, Aggression	
Justifying	Explaining	

- C. Willingness is the key to surrender/trusting more? Telephoning other members? More meetings? Getting involved in GA?

(Yellow Step Study- continued)

Step Three promises true independence through our decision to know God's will for us.

Discuss:

- A. How have we changed or attempted to change our behavior since GA?**
 - 1. Have we stopped gambling?**
 - 2. Are we liking and caring more about ourselves?**
 - 3. Are we liking and caring more about others?**
 - 4. Do we have a desire to grow and mature?**
 - 5. Other?**
- B. Are our natural goals high enough or do we need to have "higher" goals to obtain happiness and independence?**
- C. What circumstances hold our interest on a continuing basis?**
- D. Boredom...**

End of Step Three

Beginning of Step Four

Unity Step 4 from the Red Book

STEP 4

Each Group should be self-governing except in matters affecting other Groups or Gamblers Anonymous as a whole.

Each Gamblers Anonymous Group has great latitude to conduct its affairs within the framework of the Fellowship. This preserves the freedom of choice that is so important to the Group conscience. The conduct of each Group is limited only to the extent that its actions would conflict with the Guidance Code of Gamblers Anonymous.

What type of meeting, how long the meeting lasts, break or no break, etc. affects no one but those at that meeting. However, the breaking of anonymity is something that affects others and is not a Group choice.

**From the Blue Book
Step 4**

Made a searching and fearless moral and financial inventory of ourselves.

In order to attain a more meaningful life, the compulsive gambler must undergo a complete and thorough self-appraisal. Acceptance of one's shortcomings is a prerequisite to correcting them. Members strive to find the truth about themselves, for in truth is the freedom to choose the many alternatives and opportunities that life presents.

In order to make a complete moral inventory, members must examine to the best of their ability all aspects of their character. All negative characteristics should be examined, such as selfishness, greed, procrastination, anger, envy, pride, laziness, resentment, self-pity, jealousy, insincerity, self-deception, impatience, intolerance, pessimism, and dishonesty. Equally important, however, is the acknowledgement of all one's positive characteristics, such as friendliness, optimism, empathy, industriousness, humility, kindness, dignity, tolerance and honesty. Members are urged to make a written inventory; nothing should be withheld.

In Gamblers Anonymous, the financial inventory is as important as the moral inventory. Members make a list of all monies owed as a result of gambling activities, such as loans, bad checks, thefts and other debts. In addition, they itemize their financial assets and income.

The moral and financial inventories are as important to established members as they are to newcomers. By making these inventories an ongoing process, members continually assess their character. In this way, new defects can be recognized and growth can be measured. Because money is an integral part of gambling, the compulsive gambler must use the financial inventory, together with the moral inventory, to begin a true character change.

**From the Red Book
Step 4**

Made a searching and fearless moral and financial inventory of ourselves.

Trust your Higher Power and then clean house. The first three steps have laid the groundwork for Step Four; surrender to the powerlessness to gamble and an inability to manage the problems in your life. Then acquire a senior partner much greater than oneself to guide and accompany you through the remaining steps. Together you can accomplish more than can be done alone.

Step Four – now you are in the “Cleaning House” area of your life. Now begin an intensive inner search to locate as much guilt, and good, as you can uncover. This search is healthy and practical because dormant, accumulating guilt has long been an enemy. Most compulsive gamblers covered this guilt with clever a façade called rationalization. In the past, rationalization tricked us into making bad actions seem not so bad or even good. Honesty and only honesty can break down this tricky façade. Then you can see yourself exactly as you are for perhaps the first time in your life. Face squarely the financial and emotional wrongs that have been done in order to then forgive yourself.

While doing Step Four, how do you uncover the guilt? A thorough reading of “A Guide to the Fourth Step Inventory” available through your group or from the ISO can be of great assistance. Then, an autobiographical approach starting with your first bet or even earlier, and moving toward the present seems indicated. As one moves along you will discover many areas of guilt long forgotten: over-indulgence, greed, lying, dishonesty, failure to accept responsibility, self-destruction, destruction of others, excessive waste of time, arrogance, resentment, jealousy and many others. Guilt is personal; therefore you must seek it out by yourself.

Your mind will probably turn to loved ones and the harm laid on them; the dishing out of insecurity so generously. This guilt must be fully

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

realized so we will not be tempted to deal with it later by further gambling. In taking inventory honestly, examine each incident that you can recall from your gambling days. This includes the things you did and those you failed to do; the physical and the abuse, which left a lifetime impression on others. Look at your manipulation of people, which stole from their right to lead their own lives.

No two gamblers are alike yet none is unique. Each one of us has our own collection of guilt, which must be released. After discovering this guilt, we will find it necessary to rid ourselves of it. The steps that follow will show you how to do this. By practicing these steps you can attain a better way of life based on solid healing principles.

After completing accumulated your personal barrel of guilt through completing Step Four, you can get rid of it in Step Five and find that you are a better person. This new life can be maintained one day at a time.

*Suggestions for discussion on this step from
The Yellow Step Study Guide*

STEP 4

Made a searching and fearless moral and financial inventory of ourselves.

Step Four tells us that our instincts are God given; yet misdirected instincts lead to serious emotional problems.

1. The need for security, which is instinctive, can drive us to become power mad and selfish.
2. Greed, lust, envy and pride are destructive habits.

Discuss:

- A. What obsessions and excesses in our lives became a problem?
- B. Are we prone to tolerate bad habits rather than change them?

Willingness to look at our misdirected instincts (defects) is pride in reverse.

1. It is a step toward humility.
2. It is a lessening of our "big shot ego."

Discuss:

- A. Persistence to gamble after we discovered we may be destroying ourselves.
- B. What experience brought us to GA/or finally started our belief in GA?

Many members feel that gambling is their only defect.

1. But we identify with other members who claim many defects.
2. We learn that a drastic change in many areas of our lives will be required to maintain the desire to stop gambling.

(Yellow Step Study- continued)

Discuss:

A. Were we prone to blame others for:

1. Our failings?
2. Gambling defeats/losses?
3. Gambling?
4. Other reasons.

B. What does "taking another's inventory" symbolize?

Step Four warns us that we must be fearless when taking our moral and financial inventories.

1. Our egos have created many roadblocks.
2. Taking 1st, 2nd, & 3rd inventories will give us a clear perspective of ourselves.

Discuss:

A. Methods for taking inventory.

1. Written
2. How Often/When.
3. Use of "A Guide to the Fourth Step Inventory."

B. Pick your special defect and discuss:

Greed	Lust	Selfishness	Blaming
Anger	Envy	Rationalizing	Bad listener
Pride	Talk too much	Impatience	Other _____

GA

Gamblers Anonymous

A Guide to Fourth Step Inventory

4th Step Inventory

Introduction

A GUIDE TO THE FOURTH STEP MORAL INVENTORY

The Truth Shall Set You Free

The Fourth Step of the GA program reads: ***“Made a searching and fearless moral and financial inventory of ourselves.”*** Inasmuch as G.A. presently has an excellent guide (the Pressure Group Handbook) to help us come to grips with our financial problems, this guide will concern itself with other areas of our life.

We feel that a guide to fourth step moral inventory is a long overdue necessity in the G.A. program.

The adjectives that describe the seriousness and intensity needed to approach the action demanded in the Fourth Step of the recovery program are ***“searching”*** and ***“fearless.”*** This means that we must examine, evaluate and categorize every area of our lives. The very nature of the word ***“inventory”*** is to make a detailed list of articles or ideas and to determine their worth or value.

It is with this thought in mind that we approached the writing of this ***“guide to moral inventory.”*** We have tried to be as far reaching and searching as possible, to keep in tune with the true spirit of this most important step to our recovery. There are no boundaries, nor are there any shortcuts in the search for the truth. In searching for the truth we must continue to pursue the truth, regardless of where that search may take us. We must do this fearlessly for there is nothing to fear in finding the truth. The results will be quite the contrary, for the truth shall set us free – free to choose the many alternatives and opportunities that life presents, and free to be a contributing and integral part of the wonderful community of mankind.

This Guide to Fourth Step inventory is divided into three sections. They are:

1. CHARACTER
2. PRIORITIES, PRINCIPLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
3. FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

Instructions

We herewith submit the following suggestions for the use of this Guide to Moral Inventory:

1. This guide is designed to be most effective if the moral inventory is written. It can then be reviewed by the person doing it for content, thoroughness and truth.
2. This inventory is not designed to be taken in an hour or two. We suggest that you take an hour each evening, in the hopes that you can complete it in two to three weeks.
3. Take it alone without prompting or coaching from anyone.
4. Upon its completion, and at your option, you may want to share it with someone you can confide in.
5. Everyone in G.A., regardless of the number of years in the program, should take this written moral inventory at least once each year.
6. Save your completed inventory and compare it to future inventories you may take.
7. A new member of G.A. should take this inventory after being in the program at least 3 months.
8. Be as honest and thorough as you can. If you don't, you are only "*short-changing*" yourself.
9. Search for the truth and come to know the truth, for the truth shall set you free.

Section I

Character

When we speak of character, we are speaking about distinctive traits, qualities or attributes of an individual's pattern of behavior, personality and moral constitution. Character, then, is not something we are born with, but rather, something we have become.

It is true that in our early years there were a number of outside influences (parents, school, church, friends and acquaintances) that played important roles in the development of our early character, be it good or bad. Fortunately, however, we are never "stuck" with whatever kind of character we may be, for character can always be developed and improved.

Character plays an important role in a person's destiny. Character determines how one will deal with feelings and emotions. A person's character will determine a person's standing with his peers, and finally, character plays the ultimate role with the individual himself. Character is the key to all departments of one's life and had a direct effect on the parts of life covered by the ensuing sections of this guide to moral inventory.

Step 6:

"Were entirely ready to have these defects of character removed."

Comment: This step specifically deals with character as a whole.

*"The most difficult and time consuming job with which a person will be faced is that of bringing about a **character change within themselves.**"*

It is necessary at this time, for the sake of this inventory, to show the basic difference between personality and character so that we may put each in its proper perspective.

Personality: Applies to such personal qualities as voice, hearing, cordiality, etc., that determine the way a person acts in his/her social and personal relationships.

Character: Applies to distinctive traits, qualities or attributes of an individual pattern of behavior, personality and moral constitution.

Again, we can readily see that personality is only a part of character. With this thought in mind let us now begin to inventory our whole character makeup with as much honesty as possible.

Remember, there are three distinctive parts that make up our character. They are:

1. Behavior – Our way of acting.
2. Personality – Our personal or individual qualities that makes us different and act differently from one another.
3. Moral Constitution – In agreement with a standard of what is right and good in character or conduct.

Strengths of Character

Tolerance: Indulgence or forbearance in judging the opinions, customs or acts of others without necessarily agreeing or sympathizing.

Promptness: The state of doing what has to be done, without delay or excuse.

Honesty: Being fair and candid in dealing and talking with other people, characterized by openness and sincerity.

Communication: Ability to transmit and receive information and feelings and understanding through talk, gestures or writing.

Charity: Being kind and generous in the giving of help, understanding and compassion to those in need.

Dignity: A state of worthiness, honor and self-respect about one's general appearance and manner.

Humility: Regardless of ability, fame or fortune, the state of mind that one is not better than another person.

Industriousness: The giving of an earnest, hardworking, diligent and steady effort to all challenges undertaken.

Optimism: The tendency to take the most hopeful view of matters or expect the best outcome regardless of circumstances. The practice of looking on the bright side of things.

Forgiveness: To give up the wish to punish or get even with. To pardon or excuse.

Responsibility: Obligated or expected to account for; ability to tell right from wrong.

Consideration: To be thoughtful of others and their feelings.

Friendliness: On good terms; not hostile. The quality or condition of being friendly.

Defects of Character

Following is a list of some of the defects of character, for your review. Read them carefully.

Selfishness: Having such regard for one's own interest and advantage that the happiness and welfare of others becomes of less concern than is considered right or just.

Alibi: To minimize, pardon, or excuse a wrong, a fault, or an action as though it were unimportant.

False Pride (Arrogance): An excessive belief in one's own worth, merit or superiority that is unjustified.

Phoniness: Presenting oneself to be **something** he is not, manifesting this through his actions, words or deeds; an imposter.

Procrastination: The postponement, deferment or delay in saying or doing those things that must be done.

Laziness: Not willing or eager to work or exert oneself. Doing only the minimum that has to be done in order to get by.

Coarseness: Not refined in feelings, manners, language or taste.

Self-Deception: The act or fact of deceiving oneself; self-delusion.

Condemnation: To criticize or condemn; being judgmental.

Insincerity: Not honest or candid; deceitful.

Impatience: Not willing to bear delay, opposition, pain or bother.

Other defects of character: **Intolerance, Dishonesty, Inability or Unwillingness to Communicate, Self-Pity, Pessimism, Bigotry**

Having read all the previous information carefully, we now ask you to begin to inventory your character. The following questions are put forth for you to answer in writing, to the best of your ability. Try to be

as searching and fearless in your answers as is asked for in Step Four of the Recovery Program. Remember, this is for you, in your search for the truth.

1. List which character traits are your strengths and which are your weaknesses.
2. Write a description of each of these character traits as they apply to you. For each written description ask yourself the following questions. How does this particular character trait affect your:
 - a. Self-Image? – View of oneself.
 - b. Attitude? – A way of thinking, acting or feeling.
 - c. Performance? – Execution, accomplishment or achievement.
 - d. Reputation? – What people think and say the character of a person is. (It may help you to write some specific examples.)
3. With reference to your list of strengths:
 - a. Just how strong is each? Scale each strength, using 10 as the highest mark.
 - b. Do you find that you can build on your strengths?
 - c. Are you willing to do so?
 - d. Would it be worth the effort?
 - e. Write what you would be willing to do to further develop each of your strengths.
 - f. Have you found that any of your “so-called” strengths, are really not strengths at all? Has your scale of 1-10 changed?
 - g. If so, what are you going to do about it? Are you willing to make a commitment to the strengthening of your character?
4. With reference to your character defects:
 - a. Rate each defect of character using the number one (1) as the lowest possible mark.
 - b. Do you find that some of your defects of character are really not as bad as you thought they were?
 - c. Are you willing to work at removing these defects of character?
 - d. Are you willing to make a commitment to that effect?
 - e. List the number of ways the removal of your defects would benefit you and others.
 - f. As you improve on one character trait, will it aid you in improving on others? How?

Following is a suggested mini-formula to help you build your character:

1. Take this inventory as thoroughly and honestly as possible.
2. Follow the steps of recovery to the best of your ability for they are the foundation to character building.
3. When you are ready, and at your option, share your inventory with someone you can confide in.
4. Plan the actions you think you must take to develop a better character.

5. Implement your plan. Do not be afraid to ask for help.
6. Do not confuse your outgoing personality with your inward character.

***DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE EVER DONE WORKING ON YOUR
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT?***

Section II

Priorities – Principles and Responsibilities

When joining GA and committing to a new way of life, a critical review of priorities, principles and responsibilities is necessary to determine if they are in proper perspective.

There are numerous items in our lives that are hazardous to our basic well being. Because of the high priority placed on them, other areas of life are neglected, which, in essence, causes growing and continuing problems. If priorities are out of order they will affect participation in all phases of life. A constant balance needs to be maintained between knowledge of self and communication of that inner self with the outside world. Periodic re-evaluation is an essential tool in this phase of moral inventory as life events, age, and participation in the program will affect emphasis on priorities.

Examine the following suggested priorities to determine if they are in a sensible and orderly sequence. How do you fit into the world around you?

1. Abstinence from gambling.
2. To myself and my Higher Power.
3. To my family.
4. To my job, vocation or profession.
5. To my goals, dreams and aspirations.
6. To friends, neighbors and community.
7. To special interest areas.

PRIORITIES (by consensus of opinion)

1. **Abstinence from gambling:** If, by your own admission, you are a compulsive gambler and have made a commitment to stop, there is not one thing that should supersede abstinence

from gambling. Without abstinence very little else is possible, for by the very nature of the illness a lifetime of growth, responsibility, awareness and peace of mind are an impossibility.

LETTING GO OF THE GAMBLER:

- a. How important is it that you stop gambling?
- b. Do you try to implement into your daily life the Gamblers Anonymous recovery program?
- c. Do you attend meetings regularly?
- d. What do you do for other compulsive gamblers?
- e. What does Gamblers Anonymous mean to you?
- f. Do you listen and evaluate what others say at meetings?
- g. How are you involved in the program?

2. **To Myself and My Higher Power:** We cannot be right with other people until we are right for ourselves. In order for this to happen there must be an inner feeling of self-esteem and a feeling of belonging. Self-knowledge is not enough to sustain us, but with the help of a Power greater than ourselves all things are possible. That is, when you become one with the Power, happiness and peace of mind is the result.

- a. Have I honestly faced myself and examined my strengths and weaknesses?
- b. Write a description of yourself.
- c. After reading the description, can you say that you would choose a friend fitting that description?
- d. Would you say that you are neat and clean, both of mind and body?
- e. Imagine a model person possessing all the qualities that would make him a desirable friend. How do you compare? Is it possible that you can strive to become that person?
- f. How would you describe your general attitude toward life?
- g. Do you believe in a Power greater than yourself?
- h. Write a description of your Higher Power, whatever you conceive it to be. Be thorough!
- i. What do you will or wish for yourself?
- j. What does your Higher Power will or wish for you?
- k. Is there much difference?

- a. Do you enjoy your job? If not, why?
- b. At the end of a day's work do you feel that you have accomplished anything?
- c. What rewards do you think you acquire from your job?
- d. Do you give it your best effort?
- e. How can you become better at what you do?
- f. Do you think that you are in the right profession? If not, what do you intend to do about it?

5. **To My Goals, Dreams and Aspirations:** A person with goals has hope, happiness and a healthy state of being. Hope, happiness and a healthy state of being are natural by-products in the pursuit of worthy goals. A hopeless person merely exists. The person with goals, dreams and aspirations lives life fully. By envisioning ways to rise above yourself and achieve that which is just out of your grasp, a healthy state of being is maintained. The thrill of living is not so much an achievement, but attempts to achieve. The pursuit of goals fosters confidence, enthusiasm and courage. At day's end, a person may be comfortable in the knowledge he lives twenty-four hours with serenity.

- a. What are your goals in life? List them and write a description of each.
- b. Which of these are realistic, achievable and are worthy of your time and effort?
- c. Would the pursuit of these goals interfere with your other responsibilities? How?
- d. Are you doing anything positive to achieve these goals or are you just wishing they happen?
- e. Do you have a definite plan to achieve these goals? What is your plan?
- f. What actions are you taking on a daily basis to achieve these goals?
- g. What price are you willing to pay to make these goals a reality? Will it be worth the price?

6. **Friends, Neighbors, Community and Country:** Our general well-being benefits from associations that we have with friends and neighbors and the part we play in our community. It offers us the opportunity to be an integral part in the general scheme of things. It is a great sense of fulfillment to feel you can be a working and integral part of the community of mankind.

- a. Make a list of your closest friends and write a short description of your feelings toward each one of them.
 - b. Are your actions and behavior toward them consistent with your feelings?
 - c. Can you accept them for who they are, or do you find yourself critical of their shortcomings?
 - d. Are you there when they need you?
 - e. How would you describe your relationship with your neighbors?
 - f. What do you think they think of you?
 - g. What is your role in the community?
 - h. Do you take part in any community activities, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Boy Scouts, Little League, local school activities, etc.?
 - i. What do you do as an individual to make your community a better place in which to live?
 - j. Write a short description of how you feel about your country.
 - k. What do you do to make the country a better place to live in?
7. **Special Interest Areas:** There are many other areas in life that apply to an individual that have a high priority. We all have them but they are different for each one of us. It could be a hobby, or any number of things. If they are all good, if we enjoy them, and they are important to us, then we should pursue them as long as they do not interfere with the well-being of others.
- a. Make a list of things you do that you take special interest in.
 - b. Along side each thing, describe their importance to you and the benefits you derive from doing them.
 - c. Is there any value in them other than the pleasure?
 - d. Can you financially afford them?
 - e. Do the other members of your family have an interest in them?
 - f. In your pursuit of these things, what hardships, if any, do you place on your family?
 - g. Do you ever find that you are shirking responsibilities in other areas of your life in doing these things? In what way?

Section III

Feelings and Emotions

At one time or another, every human being has experienced every feeling and human emotion known to mankind. If there is any difference in our experience with feelings and emotions, it lies in the degree of experience. We have all had a taste of every human feeling and emotion in existence.

Feelings, be they positive or negative, are not necessarily defects of character. Positive feelings add to your sense of strength and well-being and produce pleasure, hope and fullness of life. Negative feelings interfere with pleasure and use up energy, leaving us feeling lonely and empty. Feelings are a mental result of how we have handled various situations throughout our lives and a result of how our minds were programmed in the formative years.

Feelings, be they love or hate, joy or remorse, happiness or anger, are valid and an integral part of the human makeup. We experience a multitude of feelings every day of our lives, some positive and some negative. It is much healthier to face up to our feelings and deal with them, than to deny their existence.

Feelings can come over us without a moment's notice. They have no boundaries. Everyone, at one time or another, has experienced fear, worry, remorse, joy, love and happiness. Whatever the feeling, be they positive or negative, are all very natural and normal and serve a definite purpose. Whatever your feelings are, they are not unique. The question is: How do we deal with them?

Certain feelings can become a problem when we become consumed with them, and if and when this occurs, we can be assured that the reason this has happened is because we have failed to deal with them properly.

This section will concern itself with various feelings which we will try to sort out as they apply to us individually and how we can best deal with them.

Following is a list of some of the feelings that we experience on a regular basis, sometimes daily.

Guilt (remorse)	Joy
Happiness	Resentment
Anger	Contentment
Fear	Frustration
Love	Hope
Hatred	Gratitude
Envy	Loneliness
Pride	Depression
Freedom	Sadness
Suspicion	Worry

1. Do you understand the meaning of the above mentioned feelings? If not, look up the meanings in a dictionary and write the definitions down.
2. Have you, at one time or another, experienced each of the above mentioned feelings?
3. List the feelings you experience on a daily basis.
4. List the feelings you would like to experience on a daily basis.
 - a. Put a check mark on all those feelings you would like to experience but do not experience. Why are these important to you?
 - b. How does the lack of these feeling affect your daily life?
 - c. What positive steps can you take to achieve these feelings?
 - d. How much of yourself are you willing to give to achieve these feelings? Explain.
5. List the feelings that create problems in your life.
 - a. Write a short description of each of these feelings as they apply to you.
 - b. Why, in your opinion, do you think you are experiencing each of these feelings?

- c. What action can you take to cope with any of these feelings?
6. Are you capable of expressing your feelings to those around you?
 - a. If you do express your feelings, in what manner do you do this?
 - b. If you do tend to hide your feelings, do you know the reasons?
What are the reasons?

Following is a suggested mini-formula to help you deal with your feelings. In writing:

1. Isolate and define each of your feelings.
2. Try to pinpoint the persons, places, things, or set of circumstances that cause you to have these feelings. (Possible examples- fear, security, sex, etc.)
3. Share your thoughts about these feelings with someone you can confide in.
4. Make a definite plan of attack to control your feelings, good or bad. Review your plan with someone you feel comfortable with.
5. Implement your plan. **Do not be afraid to ask for help.**

Conclusion

Upon completion of this inventory, if taken in the spirit of a search for the truth, you should have a basic and sound overview of what you are made of, what you stand for, what you are doing, where you are going, and how you fit in the world around you. An inventory, of course, reveals the negative as well as the positive aspects of one's life and its primary value is that of sorting things out in an orderly and thorough fashion. It is certainly the starting point for a meaningful and manageable life. But a starting point is all that it is.

The next job lies with what we do with this truth we have found out about ourselves. What action will we take toward our newly made commitments? How well will we practice and implement our plans? The task lies ahead but it is a task well worth pursuing for it is the task that stimulates growth, and growth brings happiness and happiness means love, and love is God, and love is truth, and the truth shall set you free.

End of Step Four

Beginning of Step Five

Unity Step 5 from the Red Book

STEP 5

**Gamblers Anonymous has but one primary purpose –
to carry its message to the compulsive gambler
who still suffers.**

Personal direction and purpose of life are often different for each of us but hopefully we shall remember that the one common bond of responsibility that we share on a Group level is to carry the message of hope to the compulsive gambler who still suffers. It should be noted that the suffering compulsive gambler can be sitting next to you at your meeting as well as those who have never heard of Gamblers Anonymous.

Reaching compulsive gamblers is a major goal around which the members of Gamblers Anonymous gather in unity. The perpetuation of the Fellowship depends on the practice of this principle.

The reason for this singleness of purpose is to maximize the efficiency of the Fellowship's efforts to carry its message to suffering compulsive gamblers, in or outside of the Fellowship. The gift of recovery works best when it is shared.

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From the Blue Book Step 5

Admitted to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

In Step Five the member is truthful not only to himself, but to someone else, either on an individual or group basis. By revealing to another person the full extent of one's shortcomings, one gains an objectivity and perspective not otherwise available.

After making a thorough moral and financial inventory, it is imperative that the compulsive gambler shares the findings with someone else. The admission of wrongdoing brings immense relief. Keeping the facts of the moral inventory locked inside oneself imposes a burden heavier than any person can bear. By sharing, pressure and anxiety are released.

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From the Red Book Step 5

Admitted to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

It is suggested that this step be done shortly after completing Step Four, while the facts revealed in Step Four are still fresh in our mind. In Step Four we dig inside ourselves, as most compulsive gamblers accumulate loads of guilt. In Step Five we dispose of this guilt and cope with everyday problems. One can always look back, and must in making amends, but no longer do you have to live with your personal guilt bag.

Selecting someone to help you with the fifth step is the next chore. This person should fill two needs; one, they should have the experience and wisdom to help see the situation clearly and be a person who will keep the conversation completely confidential. Perhaps your sponsor will be the logical choice, your clergyman or a good friend – you must make the choice. Reread the fourth step and use your notes as an agenda. Honesty, open-mindedness and sincerity will make the whole thing go more smoothly. Your ego, which won't like the idea of displaying former misdeeds to another human being, will quickly accept the healthy atmosphere. You will see yourself more clearly after Step Four and this insight will remain. Self-knowledge has no bounds. Your new found serenity will enable you to calmly listen and learn. Your awareness will really accelerate. Your relief at having disposed of this guilt will be tremendous.

Humility is a very elusive trait, which seems to fly away from those who feel they possess it. If this is so, you must seek to become a well-adjusted person and, in so doing, you will gain humility. Do not take this step lightly or minimize its importance. Those who have done this step feel that guilt must be disposed of, and action through this step is the proper way to do it.

Guilt disposed of as suggested will aid you in so many ways. Self-honesty is accelerated as you can clearly see your guilt. No longer

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will you feel unique. Rather, you will join the human race knowing that you are not alone. What the program teaches comes true. You will realize no two gamblers are alike yet none is original. Upon entering the program, you now feel a sense of being understood. No longer will you be alone, and knowledge of this is exhilarating. As conflicts arise, however, one tends to pull away from this beautiful union. Now, the fifth step helps resolve these conflicts and you say to all the world: "I am a human being."

*Suggestions for discussion on this step from
The Yellow Step Study Guide*

STEP 5

**Admitted to ourselves to another human being the exact nature
of our wrongs.**

Step Five is ego deflating and necessary.

- 1. We must talk about our defects to remove our guilt.**
- 2. We must see what we were, to see what we can become.**

Discuss:

- A. Habit of lying and hiding from problems. What was the outcome?**
- B. Is identifying our character defects (problems) 90% of the solution?**
- C. Evidence of our immaturity – past and present.**

Many feel it is not necessary to share humiliating experiences.

- 1. We are prone to carry burdens alone.**
- 2. Dramatic descriptions of our gambling behavior are only offered.**

Discuss:

- A. Has honesty with self and others improved since coming to GA? Explain.**
- B. Has our therapy changed directions? Tone?**
- C. How long can we carry resentments and angers? What happens?**

Humility is born in Step Five. Our burden is lightened by admitting our defects to another human being.

- 1. We become forgiving by seeking forgiveness.**
- 2. Many members feel closer to their Higher Power and man after working Step Five.**

(Yellow Step Study- continued)

Discuss:

- A. How peace of mind is achieved by removing guilt and/or ending the lie.**
- B. Describe the feeling of admitting to other GA members, at our first meeting that we have a gambling problem.**
- C. To whom should we seek to make our admissions? Sponsor? Friend? Spouse? Others?**

“Big Shotism” often hides our true motives or painful experiences.

Discuss:

- A. What types of persons do we tend to respect?**
- B. What types of persons do we tend to avoid?**
- C. Who do we trust?**
- D. Disasters caused by wanting too much of living beyond our means.**

End of Step Five

Beginning of Step Six

Unity Step 6 from the Red Book

STEP 6

Gamblers Anonymous ought never endorse, finance or lend the Gamblers Anonymous name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Most fundamental at this point is the constant awareness that Gamblers Anonymous is so willing to cooperate but not "Affiliate" with any outside enterprise. Any other course presents the possibility of controversy clouded behind the motives and direction of any well-meaning Group or individual, creating a diversion from the primary purpose of Gamblers Anonymous. If we were to apply our energies toward any "related facilities" would we then set aside time and attention required to share with the suffering compulsive gambler? And would we then suffer from internal strife as we argue over money, rules, requirements; frightening? Yes. So we preserve the tradition of not lending the Gamblers Anonymous name.

Gamblers Anonymous works in large part because the program is kept pure of outside interests. Energy, time, money and efforts would be wasted by supporting any outside cause or organization. Such support would also be detrimental to the public acceptance of individual Groups or the Fellowship as a whole. Endorsement of anything outside of the Fellowship would also lead to internal disagreement. For this reason, Gamblers Anonymous takes no part in political causes or public issues.

This tradition warns us to stay within our area of expertise. One gambler helping the other is the reason for our existence. We should confine our actions to helping other compulsive gamblers for the maximum result and without the possibility of offending anyone.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Blue Book Step 6

Were entirely ready to have these defects of character removed.

In this step members are asked only that they be ready and willing to have their character defects removed. This is a step of preparation in that it does not ask them to remove their character defects but simply to open their hearts and minds and to be ready for change.

Members are often reluctant to make necessary changes in their personality because of the security they experience from deeply ingrained character traits. In this step, the member is encouraged to be open to shedding his or her character defects, and to have faith that a new and better self will emerge.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Red Book Step 6

Were entirely ready to have these defects of character removed.

Some of our Character Defects

Anger	Frustration	Remorse
Arrogance	Hatred	Resentment
Anxiety	Impatience	Revenge
Bigotry	Inadequacy	Selfishness
Conceit	Intolerance	Self-Seeking
Dishonesty	Laziness	Worry
Egotism	Profanity	False Pride
Fear	Procrastination	

Housekeeping is not easy, especially when the dirt has been building up for so long. Most compulsive gamblers slither through life hiding from themselves and now strive to remove the mask so that they can see themselves.

In Step Four, we discovered many wrongs and after this discovery, strived to bring these wrongs to the surface. In Step Five, we admitted and discussed these defects with someone else.

The relief was magnificent. For the first time in a long time, we felt like we were no longer playing catch up. We feel as though we can make it if we practice the program and ask for the help and accepted of our Higher Power.

In Step Six, these defects of character must be worked on and eliminated, if we want the best chance possible to arrest this illness. We're told that character defects and negative emotions are really disturbances to serenity. Strive for serenity and see that very little upsets you. In the old days everything was disturbing. Now, our awareness will prevent us from going back into the old way of life.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

Your list of character defects is the best place to start. Based on your new found knowledge of yourself, select the one with which to start. One is all that you can handle at a time. If you pick your worst defect, any success will certainly help as you work on the others.

Be willing to move slowly and steadily and realize that every human being has character defects but retaining yours may lead you back to gambling. You shouldn't subject yourself to these disturbances of serenity because you will place undue burden on your recovery.

At first, you may feel comfortable with some of these defects and are fearful about parting with them. But you will, given time, see the need for change and realize that these old enemies must go.

*Suggestions for discussion on this step from
The Yellow Step Study Guide*

STEP 6

Were entirely ready to have these defects of character removed.

Willingness and honesty will be required to repeatedly try Step Six on all our defects.

- 1. We should become willing to mature and grow.**
- 2. We must approach our growth slowly, "One Day At A Time."**

Discuss:

- A. Did our aim at maturity start before or during GA?**
- B. Has our honesty improved?**
- C. Are we more open-minded and willing to listen to others?**

There is no spiritual effort required to want to eliminate obvious destructive excesses.

- 1. Most members are prone to settle for gradual improvement and just enough recovery to get by.**
- 2. Many members feel stopping gambling is "enough."**
- 3. Any child will pull their hand off a flame.**

Discuss:

- A. Why should our recently discovered defects be removed?**
- B. Why should we attempt to "clean house?"**
- C. Name defects that we cling to, and are unwilling to remove until later. Why?**

Step Six tells us that we have natural talents for procrastination.

- 1. We dwell on our self-determined objectives and goals.**

(Yellow Step Study- continued)

Discuss:

- A. Is it our responsibility to widen our limited objectives and change our personality to a more perfect character?**
- B. Express your interpretation of a Higher Power's will for you.
Is there a meaning or purpose to your life?**
- C. Are abstaining members an example for 1st timers and newcomers?**

Step Six is a pivot and turning point within the Recovery Program.

- 1. Many pause and become undecided.**
- 2. Many balk at a view of personal perfection and the continuous effort that will be required to change their personality.**

Discuss:

- A. What is the meaning and benefit of the slogan, "One Day at a Time?"**
- B. Are we the masters of our fate?... "The Boss?"**
- C. Which is within our grasp: perfection or efforts toward perfection?**

End of Step Six

Beginning of Step Seven

Unity Step 7 from the Red Book

STEP 7

Every Gamblers Anonymous Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

In order to maintain the independence of the Fellowship as a whole as well as individual Groups, Gamblers Anonymous does not accept outside contributions. This policy is sustained in order that no undue control or influence can be exercised over Gamblers Anonymous, from without or within. By allowing outside contributions both Groups and members might be compromised over their affairs and their obligation to the Fellowship.

If anyone were to be permitted to contribute to Gamblers Anonymous other than its members, that person might expect the right to voice an opinion as to the manner that we choose to run our Fellowship.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Blue Book Step 7

Humbly ask God (of our understanding) to remove our shortcomings.

In the same way that members of Gamblers Anonymous understand that they are powerless to control their gambling problem, they also realize that by themselves they are powerless to remove their defects of character. Once members are willing to have their character defects removed, the next logical step is to seek help.

Just as members come to accept a Higher Power, it follows that only that power can remove their shortcomings. Casting aside the pride that led them to believe that they could live exclusively by their own intellect, strength and will power, members come to learn true humility.

Humility before one's God means not only modesty but also complete lack of wrongful pride in oneself. Members candidly admit all frailties, holding back nothing. Strength lies in the belief that it is possible to change our character with the help of the God of our own understanding.

Rather than an overnight remedy, the action of this step is an ongoing process of striving. Working toward change is most important. Members continue to let go of the old ways and allow the God of their understanding guide them toward peace and serenity.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Red Book Step 7

Humbly ask God (of our understanding) to remove our shortcomings.

Now you're being asked to seek and remove, via your Higher Power, your character defects. Is this really necessary? It certainly is! Character defects were a major portion of the reason we gambled. Therefore, keeping these defects can lead us back to gambling.

For example, let's take one defect – anger. Assume you get into an argument, handle it poorly and become blindly angry. Anger turns into rage. Then you feel something must be done to relieve this terrible hateful feeling and resort to what comes naturally – gambling. In the past, as you know, that pain caused by anger was at least temporarily eased through gambling. ***Compulsive gambling is a learned, inadequate response to life.*** You must rid yourself of the disturbances that you have acquired through gambling.

What can be done to prevent such a relapse? First, you must have the desire to remove this defect. The desire comes more easily if you realize what is at stake- this shortcoming can destroy you. If you are masochistic, the desire to change may be slower in coming. Assuming you want to live, however, try to take the step as indicated and humbly ask your Higher Power to remove the defect.

Humbly ask for help? A nice guy who never hurt anyone except himself? When you've survived for so long, all by yourself, how can you humbly ask for help? Look at your track record with absolute honesty. Have you really been a winner? This honest look at your chaotic years should assure you that anger must go, if only a little at a time. You can only concentrate on one defect at a time. This is a slower process but it enables you to focus more clearly. Also, working defects singly is, for most, more comfortable.

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Having selected a defect, seek help from your Higher Power. Each morning shortly after getting up, seek the will of your Higher Power daily as life's problems arise. Ask for help in reducing or removing the defect on which you will be working on that day. You must do the legwork so your Higher Power can finish the job as He sees fit.

At this point, learning to cope is a new adventure. This is something many refuse or were unable to do before entering Gamblers Anonymous. It's strange at first, but each time you cope you get better at it. When you leave the world of reality and slip into irrational anger, you should now be able to recognize that something is wrong. You now have to get yourself back on the right track so you can go deal with today. Anger, the defect on which you were working, still might be a problem. It will scare you when you react with so little control; anger could lead you back to a bet via the hatred and resentment created. You're not entitled to be angry; it's an enemy, not a friend.

Each day, practice restraint until, God willing, you have formed a beautiful new habit, a positive habit. Today anger should be under control and cannot lead you back into your addiction. Feel good about that. The same procedure can then be applied to another defect. Now you can see how your Higher Power can remove defects, if your Higher Power chooses to do so.

*Suggestions for discussion on this step from
The Yellow Step Study Guide*

STEP 7
Humbly asked God (of our understanding) to remove our shortcomings.

Step Seven states that acquiring greater humility is the foundation of the Twelve Steps.

1. Without this precious quality we cannot expect happiness.
2. The word "Humility" is disliked and greatly misunderstood in our world.

Discuss:

- A. Is a humble individual a weak individual?
- B. Was our gambling a show of courage and/or proof that we were different than our fellows?

Depending exclusively on our individual strength and intelligence is a blockade to faith in God.

1. Admitting our powerlessness was the first step toward liberation from our gambling obsession.
2. Some humility was required to stop gambling and to walk through the GA doors.

Discuss:

- A. Your growth in Gamblers Anonymous.
- B. Dependence on meetings, sponsor, etc...
- C. First meeting: Shame? Fear? Other...?

We have acquired some peace by working Steps 4, 5 and 6.

1. These humbling steps have provided a source of serenity.
2. We should face this fact and proceed to search for deeper personal objectives.

(Yellow Step Study- continued)

Discuss:

- A. What is blocking our will to have certain defects removed?**
- B. What are the benefits of prayer and meditation?**
- C. Do we have a willingness to be honest, tolerant and more loving? Why?**

Discuss:

- A. What is the meaning of the Serenity Prayer? (God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference).**
- B. Who or what will we become if this prayer is answered?**

End of Step Seven

Beginning of Step Eight

Unity Step 8 from the Red Book

STEP 8

Gamblers Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Step 8

Gamblers Anonymous operates on the principle that compulsive gamblers can best help each other recover without the use of outside professional services. We believe that we are the most qualified to conduct the Fellowship's affairs.

The validity of professional assistance is not in question. Gamblers Anonymous members are urged to seek outside help, if necessary. However, if professional therapists were to operate within the Fellowship, their views might conflict with Gamblers Anonymous principles. By remaining non-professional, Gamblers Anonymous avoids the controversies that would inevitably arise.

It becomes quite clear there is a need to employ special workers to handle the necessary functions of an office designed to fulfill certain responsibilities to Gamblers Anonymous. However, the principal concept is our responsibility to a new member – counseling, guidance, pressure meetings, etc., as well as the need to create an awareness for others that there is a recovery program through Gamblers Anonymous – should remain free of any financial remuneration, keeping in mind that we must put back what we received.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Blue Book Step 8

Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Most compulsive gamblers are aware that they have financially damaged many people, but they are seldom aware of all the emotional harm they have caused. The extent of emotional and financial injury they have caused is made evident only by writing a complete list of those they have hurt. The success of Step Eight is in the individual's willingness to make amends to everybody on the list.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Red Book Step 8

Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

In your fourth step inventory, you made a list of improper actions that you did as well as the good constructive accomplishments. In Step Six, you made a list of character defects. Now, Step Eight asks you to make yet another list. This one is to identify all those you have harmed, then, to become willing to make amends to them all.

First on the list, put yourself – you should have no doubt whatsoever with this choice. You've harmed yourself spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically and financially.

Have you harmed family, fellow workers, employer, church members or anyone else? What is harm anyway?

Harm seems to be abusing others and taking from them the right to lead their own lives. Family members loved us and we unable or unwilling to return that love. Perhaps, instead, we failed to provide adequately for them. Was that stealing? Perhaps, as the addiction progressed, we stole anything we could from our family or from anyone that was available.

One thing is certain, we stole time and this can never be regained. Money problems will eventually be worked out but the time lost is gone forever. With the help of our Higher Power and the program working one day at a time, we never again will lose time and money unless we choose to return to gambling. The choice is ours – to gamble and risk progressive deterioration, or not to gamble and develop a better way of life.

Did we lie? To whom and how much did we lie?

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Good judgement in making this list is vital. Do not assume harm. Look at each instance and list it if you feel you did harm to another. A good yardstick is to ask oneself whether omitting a name might later return to “bug” you. If yes, add that name. Let’s say you wasted many hours at work as you waited and prepared your gambling actions. Now, in your new way of life, you can show your boss someone with a clear mind who can hardly return his ill-gotten gains without endangering himself and his family; but, he might have money in an unmarked envelope to atone for the theft, with harms being listed. The method of making restitution will be determined in the step, which follows. To be forgiven, you must first forgive others and then yourself. Therefore, don’t leave off the list a person harmed but who had also harmed you. The entire aim is to set right the harm you have done – nothing else matters. This step is starting your return to society. Properly done, all fear will dissipate and you will be free to talk and move about as a normal person.

The list should include everyone you have harmed. After having the willingness to make amends, you will be able to resume a beneficial role in society, usually for the first time in many years.

*Suggestions for discussion on this step from
The Yellow Step Study Guide*

STEP 8

Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Step Eight is the beginning of our public relations policy and the end of isolation from our fellows.

- 1. A fascinating adventure with our new found knowledge.**
- 2. Back-tracking to survey human wreckage is required.**

Discuss:

- A. How we harmed others by gambling?**
- B. Injuries that we caused to others are festering. What are we doing about them?**

Our first obstacle in Step Eight is our defensive attitude.

- 1. We focus on wrongs done to us.**
- 2. Step Five was tough enough...let's observe some of the good we have done.**

Discuss:

- A. Blaming.**
- B. Do we dwell on our limited successes? Do we avoid painful views in the mirror?**
- C. Enemies who became friends. Why?**

Step Eight asks us to make a "deep and honest" search of our true motives and actions.

- 1. We may feel we mainly injured ourselves.**
- 2. Why list people who may not know they are injured and harmed?**

(Yellow Step Study- continued)

Discuss:

- A. Our anger and impatience. How these affect and tax others.**
- B. Specific harm done to others...not monetary.**
- C. Should our "list" enlarge as we recover from gambling?**
- D. Are we manipulating and pressuring any loved ones today?**

We are advised to use a "quiet" objective view to identify harm done to others.

- 1. Avoid extreme judgements and exaggerations.**
- 2. Avoid building unwarranted pressures.**

Discuss:

- A. Meaning of the slogan "Don't try to solve all your problems at once."**
- B. Is self-confidence growing in GA...or are we getting "cured?"**
- C. Meaning of the slogan "Easy Does It."**

End of Step Eight

Beginning of Step Nine

Unity Step 9 from the Red Book

STEP 9

Gamblers Anonymous, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Gamblers Anonymous is run by the spirit of service and not by the force of vested authority. In order to avoid the problems inherent in the authority, Gamblers Anonymous is not organized in a formal way. The Fellowship has no central, autonomous leadership. The service boards that have been created have no formal veto power and are responsible to the will of the membership as a whole.

The International Service Office, the Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees have been set up by the membership of Gamblers Anonymous to administer and guide the Fellowship. These Groups do not have power within themselves, but they are responsible to each other, and to the entire membership.

At each and every level we assume responsibility, not authority, for there needs to be some way to get the work done.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Blue Book Step 9

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

In this step, the member is asked to carry out the intention of the preceding step, to the best of his or her ability. By making amends, members free themselves of the burden of wrongdoings. In this way the negative behavior of the past is transformed into the potential for acting positively in the future.

There are different ways of making amends. Some may be financial while others may be of a more complex and personal nature. Similarly, some amends may be made immediately while others may take a number of years. There are also cases where no amends can be made because to do so would be harmful to another person. Sometimes amends cannot be made because of the inability to communicate with the aggrieved person. Where amends cannot be made directly, an alternate method of restitution may be called for, such as an act of kindness or service to Gamblers Anonymous.

Common sense, the knowledge of when to act, and courage are essential for the successful execution of Step Nine. In any case, amends should be forthright and honest, no matter what the conditions surrounding them. A member should not avoid making amends by rationalizing that an amend will injure someone else if that decision is made to spare his or her own feelings.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Red Book Step 9

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

To make direct amends means making amends in person wherever possible. If miles apart makes such a meeting impossible, a phone call perhaps, followed by a letter, would fit the bill. In regard to the method you choose, the question one must ask is: Am I following the program and taking my lumps or seeking a softer, easier way? We must be satisfied in our own heart that we did the harm and likewise we must be satisfied with the method chosen to make amends.

Which amend should be made first? Look back to Step Four and it's quite possible that you already made or started to make amends. Sometimes pressure makes this decision, although that may not be the best way. Loan sharks might scare you more than bookies so you may react to fear and start with them; bookies may lead to court action and incarceration.

The solution to these questions may be found in an effective pressure relief group meeting. Usually amidst all the confusion, it will be suggested that each creditor be asked for a moratorium. This extra time will permit a chance for a pressure relief group meeting to be held and a course charted which will, in time, rid us of all the pressure of debts and bring manageability into our new way of life.

The pressure relief meeting can cover marital, legal and financial areas.

It is an objective approach – help will come from experienced people who once were in the same shoes. The success of such a get-together depends on complete openness, spouse's willingness to cooperate in the plan and continuing desire to follow the plan to the letter until completed. It is equally important that the single member

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

also have a pressure relief group meeting. As we approach those we have harmed, we may assume to know how they will react to the effort. Try not to predict their reaction – their reaction is not predictable. At this point honesty is needed.

As long as this honesty is present, you can correctly present the harm and how you intend to try to make amends for this harm. One may be facing a long lifetime. Remember, it took a long time gambling to get to this point and it may take a longer time to repay. Recovery from addiction is a lifetime process. These wrongs can be corrected by practicing the Steps in your daily life. One may hear in Gamblers Anonymous, “You must walk the way you talk.” As one practices the Steps, personal growth will result and the family will benefit. Abstaining from gambling, working the program and making amends, you will gradually return to society. Self-respect, so long absent, starts to return.

Making amends does not always mean just repaying. You may not have taken money from your in-laws. You might have treated them poorly or with indifference. Also think about your fellow workers, teachers, neighbors, etc.

*Suggestions for discussion on this step from
The Yellow Step Study Guide*

STEP 9

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.

Good judgement will be required to take Step Nine.

- 1. Timing and prudence are needed.**
- 2. This will also take courage.**

Discuss:

- A. Has anger diminished? Can we deal with problems clearly and objectively?**
- B. Today, what personal consequences are unacceptable? What fears remain?**

Having made a list of those we harmed...we saw that "groups" of individuals are divided.

- 1. Some will be seen now, later or never.**
- 2. Some opportunities to make amends have passed.**

Discuss:

- A. Procrastination. Too much thinking and not enough work with personal problem solving and growth.**
- B. Reasons for not making amends when opportunity arose. What to do at this point?**

Step Nine warns we can only freely admit damage and apologize when...

- 1. We are reasonably certain we are recovering in the GA Program.**
- 2. We are sincere.**

(Yellow Step Study – continued)

Discuss:

- A. Current growth in GA.**
- B. Need for “self-honesty.” Has awareness of “self” improved?**
- C. Have self-esteem and confidence grown? Explain...**

Making amends may jeopardize our employment, family relations and personal friendships.

- 1. Frankness is the best method.**
- 2. When in doubt, seek help and guidance from your Higher Power, GA group or sponsor.**

Discuss:

- A. Difference between fear of consequences and shame of apologizing.**
- B. Meaning of “Serenity Prayer.”**

End of Step Nine

Beginning of Step Ten

Unity Step 10 from the Red Book

STEP 10

Gamblers Anonymous has no opinions on outside issues; hence the Gamblers Anonymous name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

The survival and growth of Gamblers Anonymous is of far greater importance than taking positions on any issues outside the Fellowship. To make public pronouncements on non-Fellowship matters would inevitably split the Group. Individuals naturally have differing opinions and eventually these differences could erode Group unity. By engaging in outside issues, the Fellowship's concentration would be diverted from our main purpose, which is to aid in the recovery of compulsive gamblers. The association of the Fellowship's name with public controversy would unnecessarily antagonize some portion of the general public. By avoiding controversy, both individual Groups and the Fellowship as a whole are able to concentrate on the aims and principles of Gamblers Anonymous.

We must always be available to assist others in obtaining information concerning the problem of compulsive gambling without giving our opinion.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Blue Book Step 10

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

Personal inventory is a continuing process of self-evaluation, encouraging the individual to make self-searching a habit, thereby increasing self-awareness. This personal inventory is a repeated assessment of one's attitudes and actions towards others as well as toward oneself. This should include an appreciation of positive traits as well.

Step Ten calls for members to continuously evaluate themselves for wrongdoings that they commit. Once recognized, members find it beneficial to promptly admit to these wrongdoings that they commit. Once recognized, members find it beneficial to promptly admit to these wrongdoings. The timely acknowledgement of the wrongs that a member has committed leads to a catharsis* of the anxiety, depression and sense of loneliness experienced prior to recognizing the wrongdoing.

In this step, members are enabled to make choices, find solutions to problems that arise, keep things in perspective, develop self-restraint, accept what they don't have, and take responsibility for their own actions. Practicing the tenth step of the Recovery Program helps change behavior patterns, discourages harboring negative emotions and encourages the development of self-esteem and other positive emotions. The ongoing process of self-appraisal promotes emotional health and maturation.

* catharsis- (ke thar' sis)- an emotional purification or relief

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Red Book Step 10

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

Now that we have progressed through the first nine steps, we should be ready to maintain them with the last three steps. Each day, take an inventory. This inventory is for today only and it shows quite clearly if the day has been used wisely or not. The daily balance sheet will help you see personal growth as you realize that you are accomplishing things, which you could not do before. This is a good feeling, which gradually increases self-worth and self-esteem. Changing “love of self,” a fantasy, to “self-love,” is a reality.

In taking inventory, look for personal growth, not perfection. For example, make a list containing five items you want to achieve. At night the inventory might reveal that you accomplished three. Be happy with three. Remembering the many days, months and even years, when you tried to think of even one thing of a positive nature that you had done. Seek daily progress, not perfection. Growth may be slow and small but be grateful for progress. The ability to cope is perhaps the most valuable reward, which you will receive from the program. You no longer have to avoid a problem by ignoring or side stepping the issue. With some problems, particularly at first, you may cope weakly. So what? Don't avoid responsibility, and as you cope on a daily basis you will become more skillful. One day at a time becomes a lifetime. Some of us tend to be over achievers; we tend to take on tasks for which we are not yet ready. Either we are too new in the program to handle such a problem or we are too ambitious. Take it easy, a little progress each day is a great reward. Perhaps two questions we might ask ourselves each day are these – Did I help another person today? Did I contribute to harmony in my world today? It is suggested that no major changes be made during the first two years of abstinence. The mental and emotional imbalance we brought to Gamblers Anonymous needs time to heal. After two years our thoughts are much clearer and success much more

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reachable. Abstinence combined with physical, mental and emotional healing will give us a logical ability to cope.

The second part of the step is sometimes more difficult. To promptly admit to being wrong means that we have become a humble and can rid ourselves of deceit, arrogance, false pride and other character defects. If we can admit to being wrong right now, we are truly gaining a deeper insight into ourselves. Freely admit the other party is right and be glad for them; even appreciating confrontation and constructive criticism is a giant step. This step and the two that follow it, done each day, will help maintain daily growth. Another view is that Steps One through Nine are never done and should be regularly repeated.

(This form available from the ISO)
DAILY INVENTORY OF MY BEHAVIOR

MY INVENTORY FOR THE WEEK ENDING _____

<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>SUN</u>		<u>MON</u>	
		P	N	P	N
Aware of Others	Self-centered	—	—	—	—
Helpful to Others	Self-indulgent	—	—	—	—
Generous	Selfish	—	—	—	—
Thoughtful	Self-pitying	—	—	—	—
Open-minded, gracious	Smug, stubborn	—	—	—	—
Constructively critical	Judgmental	—	—	—	—
Patient	Impatient	—	—	—	—
Tolerant	Intolerant	—	—	—	—
Realistic	Unrealistic	—	—	—	—
Assertive	Submissive	—	—	—	—
Cooperative	Domineering	—	—	—	—
Outgoing	Withdrawn	—	—	—	—
Forgiving	Resentful	—	—	—	—
Trusting	Suspicious	—	—	—	—
Trustworthy	Prone to Gossip	—	—	—	—
Content	Envious	—	—	—	—
Cheerful	Depressed	—	—	—	—
Courteous	Discourteous	—	—	—	—
Kind	Unkind	—	—	—	—
Loving, caring	Indifferent	—	—	—	—
Discreet	Lacking discretion	—	—	—	—
Stable	Panicky, violent	—	—	—	—
Consistent	Inconsistent	—	—	—	—
Sincere	Insincere	—	—	—	—
Honest	Dishonest	—	—	—	—
Willing to admit failure	Self-righteous	—	—	—	—
Humble	Arrogant	—	—	—	—
Calm	Worrisome	—	—	—	—
Relaxed	Tense	—	—	—	—
Confident, faithful	Fearful, apprehensive	—	—	—	—
Hopeful	Despondent	—	—	—	—
Optimistic	Pessimistic	—	—	—	—
Living for today	Living in the past	—	—	—	—
Industrious	Lazy	—	—	—	—
Prompt	Procrastinating	—	—	—	—
Purposeful	Aimless	—	—	—	—
Responsible	Irresponsible	—	—	—	—
Using abilities	Disinterested in self	—	—	—	—
Thankful	Ungrateful	—	—	—	—
Seeking spiritual growth	Smug, complacent	—	—	—	—

Use this as a tool in taking your daily inventory. Place a check mark everyday either under the Positive (P) or Negative (N) column for each area listed. At the end of the week, evaluate where your negative check marks fall and set a goal to improve in those areas in the coming week.

*Suggestions for discussion on this step from
The Yellow Step Study Guide*

STEP 10

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

Step Ten tells us to put our GA way of living to practical use.

- 1. To maintain the desire to stop gambling.**
- 2. To maintain emotional balance under all circumstances.**

Discuss:

- A. How can we carry our GA way of living into our daily lives?**
- B. What particular circumstances “tick” us off and create anger?**

We cannot make much of our lives until we form the habit of self-appraisal (taking regular inventory).

- 1. Our first objective is to restrain angers, actions and judgements which encourage impatience.**
- 2. Create insurance against our return to “big shotism.”**

Discuss:

- A. Do we “think” before we speak? Are we prone to snap judgements?**
- B. Are we less angry since coming to GA? Why?**
- C. Are we still slaves to our emotions?**

Daily inventories will become routine, not the unusual.

- 1. Calming the moment.**
- 2. Deciding who is right and wrong.**
- 3. Revealing our true motives.**

(Yellow Step Study – continued)

Discuss:

- A. Do we still justify our feelings of anger?**
- B. Tolerance of others. Has it improved? Why?**
- C. Is saying, “I’m sorry” painful?**
- D. If apology is becoming easier...when did it start? Why?**

Delay of apologies and procrastination is a defense.

Discuss:

- A. Why should we promptly admit wrongs?**
- B. Having a “defense” signifies a war or contest. Who are we fighting? Why?**
- C. Hiding...**

End of Step Ten

Beginning of Step Eleven

Unity Step 11 from the Red Book

STEP 11

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films and television.

Gamblers Anonymous does not compare itself to any other Group, nor does it boast of its accomplishments and abilities to the public. However, Gamblers Anonymous does make itself available to anyone interested in the fellowship or in the gambling problem.

In order to make the fellowship visible, Gamblers Anonymous informs and educates the public about the problem of compulsive gambling and about the fellowship itself. Personal stories of members in newspapers, magazines, on radio and television, as well as spot announcements, all help to spread an awareness of Gamblers Anonymous. The fellowship does not glorify the name of Gamblers Anonymous or its merits as a Group – rather, it works to encourage compulsive gamblers to attend meetings.

Personal publicity is always shunned, and anonymity is carefully preserved because the fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous is more important than any one member. By maintaining this policy, any problems that accrue to an individual member cannot harm the fellowship. Similarly, any achievements attained by individuals working in the program benefit the Group as a whole. This step is a constant and practical reminder that personal ambition has no place within the fellowship's public relations program.

There is a need to present to the public an insight into the problem of compulsive gambling, its effects and the program of recovery offered by the Gamblers Anonymous fellowship. This can be accomplished with respect and dignity. In the meaning of this Unity Step it is not breaking anonymity if we choose to relate to family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. that we are members of Gamblers Anonymous.

The fellowship does not boast about our accomplishments or beat the drum for new members. We do not promote the name of Gamblers Anonymous.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Blue Book Step 11

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Continuing contact with one's God, achieved through prayer and meditation, enables the member to grow personally and spiritually. One's God need not be a deity, therefore this step benefits not only those who believe in God but also those who are agnostic or atheistic. The Gamblers Anonymous program is based on personal spirituality, and as such gives members the freedom to choose by what means they contact the God of their own understanding. Whether by formal prayer or meditation, members are encouraged to make daily contact with their God. Through this continuing contact, members become more receptive to the potential experience of God's will for them and the strength to live accordingly.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Red Book Step 11

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

It should feel good to be into the maintenance steps. Step Eleven asks us to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand Him. Step Two and Three made us aware that human resources were not enough even though when most entered Gamblers Anonymous they felt such human help would be sufficient. Eventually we came to realize that our addiction meant we must use all possible help. Now we must learn better how to communicate with our Higher Power. How can we get the most help available? How can we combine Higher Power help with human help? We will need both.

Back in the gambling days, such communication was virtually impossible. Then most of us felt unworthy, ashamed and cut off from this vital contact. We sought help but offered nothing of ourselves. When one feels cut off, one doesn't make any effort to communicate with one's Higher Power.

As we approach Step Eleven, two points seem important. One is whether this step is necessary and two, whether this step helps control ego? Do we need the step? In talking with other members, we will be told that we need all the help we can get. Also we will be told that some problems cannot be solved by human resources alone. The help is available so now is the time to decide to use it. Whatever it takes, do it to avoid a return to gambling or personality of the compulsive gambler.

The second point to be considered is ego. Those that have been in the program a while see how the ego can change. From extreme unworthiness, ego can expand to a very unhealthy size in seconds. When ego swells the mind closes to new ideas from others.

The Recovery Program - Gamblers Anonymous

Our Higher Power becomes unnecessary. "We can do it ourselves."

It's time we scrapped this way of thinking and replace it with one which accepts a Higher Power as the boss and which, therefore, will not swell to an unworkable size. As you grow in the Gamblers Anonymous program, ego will become more healthy as you learn. Old ego, the source of much stress, discomfort, impatience and anxiety, will be replaced by a peace-loving serene ego.

A conscious contact seems to start with daily prayer. What is prayer? To some it is a personal chat with their Higher Power. Each of us can pray as we see fit. [Realizing your weakness you will seek the will of your Higher Power and the strength to carry it out.] Seek your Higher Power's will for yourself as you are blind to the master plan. Daily, thank your Higher Power for mercy in showing you His will.

At first prayer is difficult so you can "fake it until you make it." In time you will grow to eagerly accept prayer and know the rewards it will give you. As you try to cope with the new problems life offers each day, prayer increases the ability to cope.

Meditation is prayer at an even deeper stage of spiritual development. If one prays the Serenity Prayer, effort at concentration is on the entire prayer. To meditate you would concentrate on one word or one small group of words. Serenity, courage or wisdom would be a good place to start. A word examination like this makes the prayer more meaningful and makes you more aware of your place in the human order. This is a bare beginning in meditation and will help you to develop this meaningful practice.

The bottom line seems to be a more complete recognition of yourself in relation to God and human beings. Your success is now His, so accept your failures learn from them.

God will give you the strength to carry out His will if you seek His will and His strength.

*Suggestions for discussion on this step from
The Yellow Step Study Guide*

STEP 11

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Step Eleven outlines the promise that prayer and meditation are the means to conscious contact with our Higher Power, but –

1. Some members feel that this contact is unnecessary.
2. Many cling to “G.A. is my Higher Power” and contact is always available.

Discuss:

- A. Miracles of recovery witnessed in G.A.
- B. Is recovery accomplished alone or with the help of others? How have others in the program contributed to our personal recovery?

Those who experiment with prayer and meditation find unexpected results.

1. Closed-minded members will not try.
2. Prayers to resolve specific problems are a demand to have God conform to our will. Continued exploration of prayer and meditation is suggested to seek and do God’s will.

Discuss:

- A. How has open-mindedness and concern for others improved?
- B. Have we become interested in improving our spiritual values?
- C. Can we become the “old dog” learning new tricks?

(Yellow Step Study – continued)

Examination of any prayer will be helpful.

- 1. Read slowly.**
- 2. Self- forgetting is the goal of prayer.**
- 3. Debate and comments do not apply to experimentation and efforts at prayer. Here...we are on our own!**

Discuss:

- A. "It is better to give than to receive." Why?**
- B. When did you receive your last compliment? About what? Was it deserved?**

Imagination is the food of sound achievement. Meditation and prayer are the food of our soul's growth.

- 1. We find spiritual objectives through prayer.**
- 2. A conscious contact with God to know His will for us offers true freedom.**

Discuss:

- A. Our new values of truth and honesty – are they paying off?**
- B. Our greatest source of personal satisfaction these days. Peace of mind? Freedom? How did it happen? When? Who?**

End of Step Eleven

Beginning of Step Twelve

Unity Step 12 from the Red Book

STEP 12

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of the Gamblers Anonymous program, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

The most simple expression of humility can be considered our anonymity. As the Twelve Recovery Steps deal with us on an individual basis, the Twelve Steps of Unity help us deal in working with others.

The Twelve Steps of Unity repeatedly asks individuals to give up personal desires for the common good. Thus, the spirit of humility, which is the basis for anonymity, prevails. Members willingly sacrifice personal identity in order to preserve the collective reputation of the Fellowship and the Group. The individual's ideas and desires sometimes have to be suppressed in order to preserve Group unity. It can be said that it's "what is said" that counts, not who says it.

In Gamblers Anonymous, the principles of the Fellowship are placed before personalities, without exception. With the practice of anonymity, the principle of humility is truly at work, and it is this all-encompassing quality that permeates Gamblers Anonymous life everywhere.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Blue Book Step 12

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

The twelfth step is the culmination of the entire Recovery Program. The success of this step is determined by the effort of the members to practice these principles in their lives and in their efforts to convey to other compulsive gamblers that they can stop gambling through the practice of the Gamblers Anonymous program and thereby achieve self-respect, personal and spiritual growth. The emphasis here is not on the results, but on the effort a member makes.

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

From the Red Book Step 12

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

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

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

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

Then this caring member told you that the program was and must be self-help. Then, he explained another Gamblers Anonymous

The Recovery Program – Gamblers Anonymous

paradox. If you give of yourself and try to help another human being, you will gain from the act of giving even if your effort fails. It is in giving that we receive and so it becomes a self-help. Remember two words – effort and try. Success in this Step is putting forth the effort and trying to carry the message – not how many heard you or followed your advice.

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

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

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

- Be an example of quality abstinence.
- Accompany another member on a Twelve-Step call.
- Visit sick members.
- Phone members.
- Chat after meetings with the new members or those with problems.
- Assume some of the duties, obligations and responsibilities of the Fellowship.
- Explain your disease and how you arrested it to relatives, doctors and employers.
- Tell your story to help a fellow member.
- Do public relations work.
- Practice the Gamblers Anonymous Program.

*Suggestions for discussion on this step from
The Yellow Step Study Guide*

STEP 12

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

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

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

Discuss:

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

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

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

Discuss:

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

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

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

(Yellow Step Study – continued)

Discuss:

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

We can carry our GA spirit into our daily affairs.

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

Discuss:

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

End of Step Twelve