

BASIC TEXT

Step Two

"We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

The Second Step is necessary if we expect to achieve ongoing recovery. The First Step leaves us with a need to believe in something that can help us with our powerlessness, uselessness, and helplessness.

The First Step has left a vacuum in our lives. We need to find something to fill that void. This is the purpose of the Second Step.

Some of us didn't take this step seriously at first; we passed over it with a minimum of concern, only to find the next steps would not work until we worked Step Two. Even when we admitted that we needed help with our drug problem, many of us would not admit to the need for faith and sanity.

We have a disease: progressive, incurable and fatal. One way or another we went out and bought our destruction on the time payment plan! All of us, from the junkie snatching purses to the sweet little old lady hitting two or three doctors for legal prescriptions, have one thing in common: we seek our destruction a bag at a time, a few pills at a time, or a bottle at a time until we die. This is at least part of the insanity of addiction. The price may seem higher for the addict who prostitutes for a fix than it is for the addict who merely lies to a doctor. Ultimately both pay for their disease with their lives. Insanity is repeating the same mistakes and expecting different results.

Many of us realize when we get to the program that we have gone back time and again to using, even though we knew that

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we were destroying our lives. Insanity is using drugs day after day knowing that only physical and mental destruction comes when we use. The most obvious insanity of the disease of addiction is the obsession to use drugs.

Ask yourself this question, Do I believe it would be insane to walk up to someone and say, "May I please have a heart attack or a fatal accident?" If you can agree that this would be an insane thing, you should have no problem with the Second Step.

In this program, the first thing we do is stop using drugs. At this point, we begin to feel the pain of living without drugs or anything to replace them. The pain forces us to seek a Power greater than ourselves that can relieve our obsession to use.

The process of coming to believe is similar for most addicts. Most of us lacked a working relationship with a Higher Power. We begin to develop this relationship by simply admitting to the possibility of a Power greater than ourselves. Most of us have no trouble admitting that addiction had become a destructive force in our lives. Our best efforts resulted in ever greater destruction and despair. At some point, we realized that we needed the help of some Power greater than our addiction. Our understanding of a Higher Power is up to us. No one is going to decide for us. We can call it the group, the program, or we can call it God. The only suggested guidelines are that this Power be loving, caring and greater than ourselves. We don't have to be religious to accept this idea. The point is that we open our minds to believe. We may have difficulty with this, but by keeping an open mind, sooner or later, we find the help we need.

We talked and listened to others. We saw other people recovering, and they told us what was working for them. We began to see evidence of some Power that could not be fully explained. Confronted with this evidence, we began to accept the existence of a Power greater than ourselves. We can use this Power long before we understand it.

As we see coincidences and miracles happening in our lives, acceptance becomes trust. We grow to feel comfortable with our Higher Power as a source of strength. As we learn to trust this Power, we begin to overcome our fear of life.

The process of coming to believe restores us to sanity. The strength to move into action comes from this belief. We need to accept this step to start on the road to recovery. When our belief has grown, we are ready for Step Three.

IT WORKS HOW AND WHY

STEP TWO

"We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Our surrender in the First Step leaves us with a deep need to believe that we can recover. This surrender makes it possible for us to feel hope. By admitting our own powerlessness, we open our minds to an entirely new idea: the possibility that something greater than ourselves might be powerful enough to relieve our obsession to use drugs. It is quite likely that, before coming to NA, we never believed in any power but our own willpower, and that had failed us. NA introduces us to a new understanding. We draw hope from this understanding and begin to comprehend what it means to believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. We find additional hope by listening to other recovering addicts. We can relate to where they've been and draw hope from who they've become. We listen closely at meetings and become willing to apply what we hear to our own lives. As we begin to believe that there is hope for us, we also begin to trust the process of recovery.

Our White Booklet states, "There is one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery; this is an attitude of indifference or intolerance toward spiritual principles. Three of these that are indispensable are honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness." This doesn't mean we must be unfailingly honest, open-minded, and willing. We just have to try as best we can to practice these principles. As we first approach Step Two, we can practice the principle of honesty by acknowledging and sharing what we do or don't believe about a Power greater than ourselves. Developing our open-mindedness requires some effort, but we can practice this principle by listening to other recovering addicts share how they came to believe. For many of us, the willingness to try something new came

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about simply because we were so tired of our old ways. It seemed to us that, because our own power wasn't sufficient to restore our sanity, perhaps something else could, if we let it.

Many of us felt that insanity was too harsh a word to describe our condition. However, if we take a realistic look at our active addiction, we'll see that we have been anything but sane. For the most part, our perceptions were not based in reality. We viewed the world around us as a hostile environment. Some of us withdrew physically and had little, if any, contact with anyone. Some of us went through the motions of life but allowed nothing to touch us emotionally. Either way, we ended up feeling isolated. Despite evidence to the contrary, we felt that we were in control. We ignored or didn't believe the truths that were staring us in the face. We continued to do the same things and expected the results to be different. Worst of all was the fact that we continued to use drugs, regardless of the negative consequences we experienced. Despite the warning signs that our drug use was out of control, we continued trying to justify it. All too often, the result was that we could no longer face ourselves. When we take a realistic look at our lives, there can be no doubt that we desperately need a restoration to sanity.

Regardless of our individual interpretation of the term "restoration," most of us agree that, for us, it means changing to a point where addiction and its accompanying insanity are not controlling our lives. Being restored to sanity is a life-long process. Individually, we experience it differently at varying stages of our recovery, but we all can see some results of this process right from the beginning of our recovery. Initially, being restored to sanity means that we no longer have to use drugs. We go to meetings rather than isolating. We call our sponsor rather than sitting alone with painful feelings. We ask for our sponsor's guidance in working the steps, a real demonstration of sanity. We begin to believe that a powerful force can restore us to sanity. At long last, we feel hope for ourselves.

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not a religion. Individually, we cultivate our own beliefs about a Power greater than we are. No matter what we understand this Power to be, help is available to us all.

In the beginning, many of us turn to the group or the love we encounter in Narcotics Anonymous as our Higher Power. An NA group is a powerful example of a Power greater than ourselves at work. Often in desperation, we enter a room full of addicts who share their experience, strength, and hope with us. As we listen, we know with certainty that they have felt the hopelessness and remorse from which we, too, have suffered. As we observe other addicts practicing a new way of life without the use of drugs, we may come to believe that we, too, can recover. Watching other addicts stay clean is compelling proof of the existence of a Power greater than ourselves. We notice the acceptance that recovering addicts show each other. We watch as addicts celebrate lengths of clean time that we think will be impossible for us to attain. Perhaps someone hugs us and tells us to "keep coming back." Members give us their phone numbers. We feel the power of the group, and this helps us start to heal.

Many of us use spiritual principles as a power greater than ourselves. We come to believe that, by practicing these principles in our lives, we can be restored to sanity. This makes sense to us because we have tried many times to think ourselves into a better way of life. We usually had good intentions, but our day-to-day existence rarely measured up to those intentions. Trying it the other way, practicing a better way of life by living according to spiritual principles, will eventually have an effect on our thinking.

It is not necessary that we define for ourselves the entire concept of a Power greater than ourselves. Those of us with many years of recovery find that our understanding of a Higher Power changes over time. Our belief grows, as does our faith. We come to believe in a Power which can help us far more than we originally thought.

"We came to believe" implies a process. For some, this process is simple, and it may bring immediate results. Many of us arrived in NA so completely defeated that we were willing to try anything. Seeking help from a Power greater than ourselves may have been the best idea we had ever heard. However, the process of coming to believe can be difficult, even painful. Many of us have found that acting as if we believe is helpful. This does not mean we should be dishonest. Rather, it means that if we have doubts, we practice the program as if we believe we can be restored to sanity.

Belief in a Power greater than ourselves does not come easily to all of us. However, we have found an open mind indispensable when we approach this step. If we look around us, we find many reasons to believe. Our belief may simply be that we can recover from a life of active addiction. The freedom from the obsession to use may be our first experience of a Power greater than ourselves at work in our lives. Perhaps for the first time in many years, our obsession with drugs no longer controls our every waking moment. Knowing that we don't have to use today is a powerful belief in and of itself.

We start to develop faith through the process of coming to believe. It starts with hope. For some of us, this may be only a faint spark at first, perhaps just the thought that maybe, if we work this program, our lives will get better. Our hope turns to faith as our lives begin to improve. For many of us, faith can be described as a belief in something intangible. After all, who can logically explain the sudden lifting of an obsession to use drugs, yet this has happened for many of us. With our hope for a different life and the beginnings of our faith that recovery is possible, we start the process of coming to believe in a Power greater than ourselves.

We come from various walks of life and experience, so it is natural that we bring with us differing concepts of spirituality. In NA, no one is forced to believe any set ideas. Each one of us can believe in anything in which we want to believe. This is a spiritual program,

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As we search for understanding of a Higher Power, we can talk with our sponsor and other recovering addicts. We may ask them what their idea of a Higher Power is and how they have arrived at it. This may open our minds to possibilities we hadn't considered before.

While it is useful to question others about their spiritual beliefs, we must remember that our understanding of a Power greater than ourselves is up to each individual. Others can help us. We may even adopt the ideas of someone else for a while or just believe that they believe. Eventually, however, we need to come to believe for ourselves. The need for our own sense of spirituality is too vital to our recovery for us to neglect this highly personal process.

For us, part of the process of coming to believe is accepting the evidence we see. Our addiction caused us to deny the truths we saw. But now, in recovery, we can believe what we see. At first, we open our minds and try something new, somehow believing that what we try might work. After we take a few small steps toward belief and trust and see results, we become willing to take bigger steps. We find that we are no longer acting as if we believe. Our belief is now reinforced with our own personal experience, some of which is unexplainable. We sometimes encounter remarkable coincidences in our lives that have no rational explanation. We don't need to explain or analyze these occurrences. We can simply accept that they happen and be grateful for them.

The longer we stay clean, the more evident it becomes that our addiction goes much deeper than the drugs we used. Much of our problem seems to center in our search for something to make us feel whole. It is a tremendous struggle to stop relying on our own reasoning and ask for help, especially given the self-centered nature of our disease. However, we are becoming open-minded. In realizing that we don't have all the answers, we begin to find some humility. We may not grasp the full impact of what being humble means, but our open-mindedness assures us that we have found and have begun to demonstrate this valuable quality.

Our humility and open-mindedness make us teachable. We allow others to share what has worked for them. This takes humility, for we must let go of our fears about how we may appear to others. Some of the strongest suggestions we may receive from other addicts are to attend meetings, ask for help, pray, and work the steps. Our experience has shown us that belief in a Higher Power leads us toward recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. People tend to live what they believe, and our newfound belief calls on us to live the program. No matter what we choose for our personal Higher Power, we've come to believe that NA works. We live what we believe by continuing on our path of recovery and working the Twelve Steps to the best of our ability.

Even after years clean, when we have been working a program of recovery and seeking change, we may at times experience periods when life seems meaningless. We may experience a sense of alienation too painful to ignore. At such times, we may find ourselves moving away from sanity, not toward it. We may begin to question our commitment to recovery. We can become obsessed with self-destructive thoughts. We may feel an urge to fall back on what seems easier: the familiar ways of our addiction. During these times, we need to renew our commitment to recovery. We trust that we are undergoing a fundamental transformation, even though we may not yet understand its full implication for our lives. As painful as it seems, we must change. If we trust that there is growth despite the pain, we can walk through these difficult periods more readily.

During these times, relying on the Second Step provides us with hope and reminds us that we are not alone. If things don't feel right, we take time to think and seek suggestions from our sponsor. We trust that, with help from other recovering addicts and a Power greater than ourselves, we can be restored to sanity in all areas of our lives. We draw upon what we have learned from going to meetings and following directions. We accept that life on life's terms may not always

be to our liking or, more importantly, to our understanding. Sanity often means that we don't act on our first impulse. We begin to make choices that help us rather than harm us. What worked for us in the beginning remains applicable, no matter how many years we have been clean. Once again, we reapply ourselves to the basics of this program: going to meetings, reaching out for help, and working the steps. Although we may feel despair, there is hope; a Power greater than ourselves is always available to us.

Along with the hope we derive from working Step Two, we find that our way of thinking is undergoing a radical change. The whole world looks different. Where before we had no reason to hope, we now have every reason to expect a dramatic difference in our lives. By being open-minded, we've opened ourselves to new ideas. We've stepped away from the problem and toward a spiritual solution.

This solution is evidenced by our open-mindedness and our willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves. We must now go on to Step Three to develop a relationship with the God of our understanding.

STEP WORKING GUIDE

Surrender to the things we cannot change through our own power is a way to get on with our lives. We seek a Higher Power of our own understanding and that becomes our ultimate guide and source of strength.

Step Two

"We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Step One strips us of our illusions about addiction; Step Two gives us hope for recovery. The Second Step tells us that what we found out about our addiction in the First Step is not the end of the story. The pain and insanity with which we have been living are unnecessary, says Step Two. They can be relieved and, in time, we will learn to live without them through working the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous.

The Second Step fills the void we feel when we've finished Step One. As we approach Step Two, we begin to consider that maybe, just maybe, there's a Power greater than ourselves—a Power capable of healing our hurt, calming our confusion, and restoring our sanity.

When we were new in the program, many of us were puzzled by this step's implication that we had been insane. From acknowledging our powerlessness to admitting our "insanity" seemed an awfully large leap. However, after being around the program for a while, we began to understand what this step was really about. We read the Basic Text and found that our insanity was defined there as "repeating the same mistakes and expecting different results." We could certainly relate to that! After all, how many times had we tried to get away with something we had never gotten away with before, each time telling ourselves, "It will be different this time." Now, that's insane! As we live the principles of this step for many years, we discover how deep our insanity actually runs; we often find that the Basic Text definition just scratches the surface.

Some of us resisted this step because we thought it required us to be religious. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, in the NA program that requires a member to be religious. The idea that "anyone may join us, regardless of... religion or lack of religion" is fiercely defended by our fellowship. Our members strive to be inclusive in this regard and do not tolerate anything that compromises the unconditional right of all addicts to develop their own individual understanding of a Power greater than themselves. This is a spiritual, not religious, program.

The beauty of the Second Step is revealed when we begin to think about what our Higher Power can be. We are encouraged to choose a Power that is loving, caring, and—most importantly—able to restore us to sanity. The Second Step does not say, "We came to believe in a Power greater than ourselves." It says, "We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." The emphasis is not on who or what this Power is, but on what this Power can do for us. The group itself certainly qualifies as a Power greater than ourselves. So do the spiritual principles contained in the Twelve Steps. And, of course, so does the understanding any one of our individual members has of a Higher Power. As we stay clean and continue to work this step, we discover that no matter how long our addiction has gone on and how far our insanity has progressed, there's no limit to the ability of a Power greater than ourselves to restore our sanity.

Hope

The hope we get from working Step Two replaces the desperation with which we came into the program. Every time we had followed what we'd thought would be a path out of our addiction - medicine, religion, or psychiatry, for instance - we found they only took us so far; none of these was sufficient for us. As we ran out of options and exhausted our resources, we wondered if we'd ever find a solution to our dilemma, if there were anything in the world that worked. In fact, we may have been slightly suspicious when we first came to Narcotics Anonymous, wondering if this was just another method that wouldn't work, or that wouldn't work well enough for us to make a difference.

However, something remarkable occurred to us as we sat in our first few meetings. There were other addicts there who had used drugs just as we had, addicts who were now clean. We believed in them. We knew we could trust them. They knew the places we'd been to in our addiction-not just the using hangouts, not just the geographic locations, but the hangouts of horror and despair our spirits had visited each time we'd used. The recovering addicts we met in NA knew those places as well as we did because they had been there themselves.

It was when we realized that these other members - addicts like ourselves - were staying clean and finding freedom that most of us first experienced the feeling of hope. We may have been standing with a group of members after a meeting. We may have been listening to someone share a story just like our own. Most of us can recall that moment, even years later -and that moment comes to all of us.

Our hope is renewed throughout our recovery. Each time something new is revealed to us about our disease, the pain of that realization is accompanied by a surge of hope. No matter how painful the process of demolishing our denial may be, something else is being restored in its place within us. Even if we don't feel like we believe in anything, we do believe in the program. We believe that we can be restored to sanity, even in the most hopeless times, even in our sickest areas.

1. What do I have hope about today?

Insanity

If we have any doubts about the need for a renewal of sanity in our lives, we're going to have trouble with this step. Reviewing our First Step should help us if we're having doubts. Now is the time to take a good look at our insanity.

2. Did I believe I could control my using? What were some of my experiences with this, and how were my efforts unsuccessful?
3. What things did I do that I can hardly believe I did when I look back at them? Did I put myself in dangerous situations to get drugs? Did I behave in ways of which I'm now ashamed? What were those situations like?

4. Did I make insane decisions as a result of my addiction? Did I quit jobs, leave friendships and other relationships, or give up on achieving other goals for no reason other than that those things interfered with my using?
5. Did I ever physically injure myself or someone else in my addiction?

Insanity is a loss of our perspective and our sense of proportion. For example, we may think that our personal problems are more important than anyone else's; in fact, we may not even be able to consider other people's needs at all. Small problems become major catastrophes. Our lives get out of balance.

Some obvious examples of insane thinking are the belief that we can stay clean on our own, or the belief that using drugs was our only problem and that everything is fine now just because we're clean. In Narcotics Anonymous, insanity is often described as the belief that we can take something outside ourselves—drugs, power, sex, food—to fix what's wrong inside ourselves: our feelings.

6. How have I overreacted or underreacted to things? How has my life been out of balance?
7. In what ways does my insanity tell me that things outside myself can make me whole or solve all my problems? Using drugs? Compulsive gambling, eating, or sex seeking? Something else?
8. Is part of my insanity the belief that the symptom of my addiction (using drugs or some other manifestation) is my only problem?

If we've been clean for a while, we may find that a whole new level of denial is making it difficult to see the insanity in our lives. Just as we did in the beginning of our recovery, we need to become familiar with the ways in which we have been insane. Many of us have found that our understanding of insanity goes further than the definition of insanity in the Basic Text. We make the same mistakes over and over again, even when we're fully aware of what the results will be. Perhaps we're hurting so bad that we don't care about the consequences, or we figure that acting on an obsession will somehow be worth the price.

When we've acted on an obsession, even though we knew what the results would be, what were we feeling and thinking beforehand? What made us go ahead?

Coming to believe

The discussion above provided several reasons why we may have trouble with this step. There may be others. It's important for us to identify and overcome any barriers that could prevent us from coming to believe.

9. Do I have any fears about coming to believe? What are they?

10. Do I have any other barriers that make it difficult for me to believe? What are they?

11. What does the phrase, "We came to believe...", mean to me?

As addicts, we're prone to wanting everything to happen instantly. But it's important to remember that Step Two is a process, not an event. Most of us don't just wake up one day and know that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. We gradually grow into this belief. Still, we don't have to just sit back and wait for our belief to grow on its own; we can help it along.

12. Have I ever believed in anything for which I didn't have tangible evidence? What was that experience like?

13. What experiences have I heard other recovering addicts share about the process of coming to believe? Have I tried any of them in my life?

14. In what do I believe?

15. How has my belief grown since I've been in recovery?

A Power greater than ourselves

Each one of us comes to recovery with a whole history of life experiences. That history will determine to a large degree the kind of understanding we develop of a Power greater than ourselves. In this step, we don't have to have a lot of specific ideas about the nature or identity of that Higher Power. That sort of understanding will come later. The kind of understanding of a Higher Power that's most important to find in the Second Step is an understanding that can help us. We're not concerned here with theological elegance or doctrinal adherence - we just want something that works.

How powerful does a Power greater than ourselves have to be? The answer to that question is simple. Our addiction as a negative power was, without a doubt, greater than we were. Our addiction led us down a path of insanity and caused us to act differently than we wanted to behave. We need something to combat that, something at least as powerful as our addiction.

16. Do I have problems accepting that there is a power or powers greater than myself?

17. What are some things that are more powerful than I am?

18. Can a Power greater than myself help me stay clean? How?

19. Can a Power greater than I am help me recover? How?

Some of us may have a very clear idea about the nature of a Power greater than ourselves, and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. In fact, Step Two is the point at which many of us begin to form our first practical ideas about a Power greater than ourselves, if we haven't already.

Many addicts have found it helpful to identify what a Power greater than ourselves is not before identifying what it is. In addition, looking at what a Power greater than ourselves can do for us may help us begin to discover more about that Power.

There are many, many understandings of a Power greater than ourselves that we can develop. We can think of it as the power of spiritual principles, the power of the NA Fellowship, "Good Orderly Direction," or anything else of which we can conceive, as long as it is loving and caring and more powerful than we are. As a matter of fact, we don't have to have any understanding at all of a Power greater than ourselves to be able to use that Power to stay clean and seek recovery.

20. What evidence do I have that a Higher Power is working in my life?

21. What are the characteristics my Higher Power does not have?

22. What are the characteristics my Higher Power has?

Restoration to sanity

It Works: How and Why defines the term "restoration" as "changing to a point where addiction and its accompanying insanity are not controlling our lives."

We find that just as our insanity was evident in our loss of perspective and sense of proportion, so we can see sanity in our lives when we begin developing a perspective that allows us to make better decisions. We find that we have choices about how to act. We begin to have the maturity and wisdom to slow down and consider all aspects of a situation before acting.

Naturally, our lives will change. Most of us have no trouble identifying the sanity in our lives when we compare our using with our early recovery, our early recovery with some time clean, and some time clean with long-term recovery. All of this is a process, and our need for a restoration to sanity will change over time.

When we're new in the program, being restored to sanity probably means not having to use anymore; when that happens, perhaps some of the insanity that is directly and obviously tied to our using will stop. We'll quit committing crimes to get drugs. We'll cease putting ourselves in certain degrading situations that serve no purpose but our using.

If we've been in recovery for some time, we may find that we have no trouble believing in a Power greater than ourselves that can help us stay clean, but we may not have considered what a restoration to sanity means to us beyond staying clean. As we grow in our recovery, it's very important that our idea of the meaning of "sanity" also grows.

23. What are some things I consider examples of sanity?

24. What changes in my thinking and behavior are necessary for my restoration to sanity?

25. In what areas of my life do I need sanity now?

- 26. How is restoration a process?
- 27. How will working the rest of the steps help me in my restoration to sanity?
- 28. How has sanity already been restored to me in my recovery?

Some of us may have unrealistic expectations about being restored to sanity. We may think that we'll never get angry again or that, as soon as we start to work this step, we will behave perfectly all the time and have no more trouble with obsessions, emotional turmoil, or imbalance in our lives. This description may seem extreme, but if we find ourselves disappointed with our personal growth in recovery or the amount of time it takes to be "restored to sanity," we may recognize some of our beliefs in this description. Most of us have found that we gain the most serenity by letting go of any expectations we may have about how our recovery is progressing.

- 29. What expectations do I have about being restored to sanity? Are they realistic, or unrealistic?
- 30. Are my realistic expectations about how my recovery is progressing being met or not? Do I understand that recovery happens over time, not overnight?
- 31. Finding ourselves able to act sanely, even once, in a situation with which we were never able to deal successfully before is evidence of sanity.
- 32. Have I had any experiences like that in my recovery? What were they?

Spiritual principles

In the Second Step, we will focus on open-mindedness, willingness, faith, trust, and humility. The principle of open-mindedness that we find in the Second Step arises from the understanding that we can't recover alone, that we need some kind of help. It continues with opening our minds to believing that help is possible for us. It doesn't matter whether we have any idea of how this Power greater than ourselves is going to help, just that we believe it's possible.

- 33. Why is having a closed mind harmful to my recovery?
- 34. How am I demonstrating open-mindedness in my life today?
- 35. In what ways has my life changed since I've been in recovery? Do I believe more change is possible?

Practicing the principle of willingness in the Second Step may begin simply. At first we may just go to meetings and listen to other recovering addicts share about their experiences with this step. Then we may begin applying what we hear to our own recovery. Of course, we ask our sponsor to guide us.

- 36. What am I willing to do to be restored to sanity?

37. Is there something I am now willing to do that I was previously unwilling to do? What is it?

We can't just sit back and wait to feel a sense of faith when working Step Two. We have to work at it. One of the suggestions that has worked for many of us is to "act as if" we had faith. This doesn't mean that we should be dishonest with ourselves. We don't need to lie to our sponsor or anyone else about where we are with this step. We're not doing this to sound good or look good. "Acting as if" simply means living as though we believe that what we hope for will happen. In the Second Step, this would mean living as though we expect to be restored to sanity. There are a variety of ways this may work in our individual lives. Many members suggest that we can begin "acting as if" by going to meetings regularly and taking direction from our sponsor.

38. What action have I been taking that demonstrates my faith?

39. How has my faith grown?

40. Have I been able to make plans, having faith that my addiction isn't going to get in the way?

Practicing the principle of trust may require overcoming a sense of fear about the process of being restored to sanity. Even if we've been clean only a short time, we've probably already experienced some emotional pain as we've grown in recovery. We may be afraid that there will be more pain. In one sense, we're right about this: There will be more pain. None of it, however, will be more than we can bear, and none of it has to be borne alone. If we can develop our sense of trust in the process of recovery and in a Power greater than ourselves, we can walk through the painful times in our recovery. We'll know that what's waiting on the other side will be more than just superficial happiness, but a fundamental transformation that will make our lives more satisfying on a deeper level.

41. What fears do I have that are getting in the way of my trust?

42. What do I need to do to let go of these fears?

43. What action am I taking that demonstrates my trust in the process of recovery and a Power greater than myself?

The principle of humility springs from our acknowledgment that there is a Power greater than ourselves. It's a tremendous struggle for most of us to stop relying on our own thinking and begin to ask for help, but when we do, we have begun to practice the principle of humility found in the Second Step.

44. Have I sought help from a Power greater than myself today? How?

45. Have I sought help from my sponsor, gone to meetings, and reached out to other recovering addicts? What were the results?

Moving on

As we get ready to go on to Step Three, we'll want to take a look at what we've gained by working Step Two. Writing about our understanding of each step as we prepare to move on helps us internalize the spiritual principles connected to it.

- 46. What action can I take that will help me along in the process of coming to believe?
- 47. What am I doing to work on overcoming any unrealistic expectations I may have about being restored to sanity?
- 48. What is my understanding of Step Two?
- 49. How has my prior knowledge and experience affected my work on this step?

As we move on to Step Three, a sense of hope is probably arising within our spirits. Even if we're not new in recovery, we've just reinforced our knowledge that recovery, growth, and change are not just possible but inevitable when we make the effort to work the steps. We can see the possibility of relief from the particular brand of insanity in which we've most recently been gripped by our addiction. We've probably already begun to experience some freedom. We're beginning to be released from the blind pursuit of our insanity. We've explored our insanity and have started to trust a Power greater than ourselves to relieve us from having to continue on the same path. We're beginning to be freed from our illusions. We no longer have to struggle to keep our addiction a secret or isolate ourselves to hide our insanity. We have seen how the program has worked for others, and we have discovered that it is beginning to work for us as well. Through our newfound faith, we achieve the willingness to move into action and work Step Three.