

# The Evolution of Step One in our Basic Text

## Review and Input version of the Basic Text

### STEP ONE

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

The bottom line of Narcotics Anonymous is staying clean. we realize that we cannot use drugs and live. When we admit our powerlessness and inability to manage our own lives, we open the door to a power greater than ourselves.

We have an incurable, progressive, terminal disease called addiction. It doesn't matter whether we just take a few pills, fix eight times a day, suck on a pipe, drink bottles of cough remedy behind drug stores, or have one tranquilizer with our first martini each day--we have certain things in common, no matter to what degree or what kind of addict we are.

When we hit bottom, we were searching for an answer -- looking for a way out. We reached out and there was an answer. Until we took Step One, we were full of reservations. We felt different. Upon working Step One, we affirmed our surrender to the principles of N.A., and only then did we overcome the alienation of being a drug addict. We became a part of society.

Where is help? How did we get it? What was it? We went to a meeting of Narcotics Anonymous. We are inclined to be skeptical. We needed proof. In that N.A. meeting was our proof. There we found people like ourselves with the same, or worse, patterns of drug dependency and failure, yet they were clean. They smile. Their eyes were clear. They cared for each other. They introduced themselves to the newcomer and made them feel welcome. During the meeting, we heard a little bit about ourselves. We understood and believed that we had no real control over drugs. We accepted the fact that every attempt we had made to control our using had failed. We knew in our hearts that drugs have the power to change us into something we didn't want to be, and all people had surely had enough of self-destruction. We wanted first to learn, then to do the things that would help us become self-affirming people.

We had to take Step One. We had to admit that we are powerless and we had to continue going to meetings to hear other addicts talk about this powerlessness. Do we understand and believe that we have no real, long term control

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over drugs? Do we fully accept the fact that every attempt on our part to taper off, or stop using, or to control our using had failed? Do we know in our hearts that drugs have the power to change us into something that we don't want to be: liars, thieves, schemers?

Step One means that we don't have to make excuses for the way we are, and that is a great freedom. Surrender means not having to fight anymore. It took a while, for some of us, to realize how unmanageable our lives had become; for others, this was about the only thing of which we could be sure. In a way, we were like gamblers, and we didn't like the odds against us. This is the way we recover when we hit bottom; it's like the slide has stopped. With the admission of complete defeat, we stopped it right there.

After struggling through the daily burden with the monkey on our backs, we reached despair. When we were beaten, we became willing. The pain of working the program did not seem as great as the pain of addiction, so we surrendered. The hole in our gut was filled with a new understanding of our place in the world and love for others. As we got clean and worked this Step, we were released from our chains. We are now free people. None of the Steps work by magic. We do not just say the words of the Steps; we live them.

Some of us found getting clean a battle. The program is simple. No one ever said it was easy. Recovery is a contact process. We don't have to hug each other but it helps. We read this book and attend N.A. meetings. We see for ourselves if the Fellowship has something to offer us. It is not where we are that counts, but where we are going~

None of us stumbled into this Fellowship brimming with love, honesty or open-minded willingness. We have all reached the point where it seemed we could not longer continue because of intense pain: physical, mental and spiritual. However, life was not unbearable; it only seemed unbearable because of our old familiar ways and our thinking. We found that we had no choice but to change, or go back to using. All that was required was willingness. When we gave it our best go, it worked for us as it has worked for others. When we could stand our old ways no longer, we began to change. All that was required is that we try. Only under attack by severe and unyielding pain did the walls begin to crumble.

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We began to see where we had rationalized the most errant sort of nonsense in order to justify the mess we had made of our lives. We could admit that we were truly powerless over our addiction and that our lives were unmanageable. We could admit complete defeat, and the help came.

This was a great paradox for us--we who were so proud of our self-sufficiency and will power. But life had brought us little happiness. We had used our will power a lot. The more we exerted our will, the worse things got. Often, when things got really bad, we had said, "This time, I have got to get my act together." By sheer will power we had gotten clean, temporarily. When we began to see that will power alone wasn't going to pull us through anymore, we tried countless other remedies--counselors, psychiatrists, hospitals, lovers, new towns, new jobs--everything we tried, failed. We quit for a day, a week or a month perhaps, but sooner or later we took that first pill, fix, drink or toke and we were gone again--worse than ever. None of our best efforts got us anywhere in the long run. Our unaided will was not enough.

We had nothing left to lose. We gave up--quit struggling--surrendered, completely and unconditionally. Then and only then did we begin to recover from the disease of addiction. Recovery begins with the first admission of powerlessness. From that point forward, we can see that every clean day is a successful day, and that any seeming failure is only a temporary setback.

We quit fighting. We accept our addiction and life the way it is. We became willing to do whatever was necessary to stay clean, even those things we didn't like doing. We had been beaten by our addictions, and left miserable and desperate. We were addicts. Drugs would no longer do for us what they had once done.

We had been beaten into a corner by our own actions, and we were in the grip of an overwhelming addiction. We had found hope. We began to see that the Steps of the program would be our source of strength and that the obsession for drugs will eventually disappear. We saw that we could learn to function in the world we live in, that we, too could find meaning and purpose in life, and that we could be rescued from insanity, depravity and death.

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Approval Version, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition and 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Revised)

## STEP ONE

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

It doesn't matter what or how much we used. In Narcotics Anonymous staying clean has to come first. We realize that we cannot use drugs and live. When we admit our powerlessness and the inability to manage our own lives, we open the door to recovery. No one could convince us that we were addicts. It is an admission that we had to make for ourselves. When some of us have doubts, we ask ourselves this question: "Can I control my use of any form of mind or mood-altering chemicals?"

Most will see that control is impossible the moment it is suggested. Whatever the outcome, we find that we cannot control our using for any length of time.

This would clearly suggest that an addict has no control over drugs. Powerlessness means using against our will. If we can't stop, how can we tell ourselves we are in control? The inability to stop using, even with the greatest willpower and the most sincere desire, is what we mean when we say, "We have absolutely no choice." However, we do have a choice after we eliminate all the things we have been telling ourselves to justify our using.

We didn't stumble into this Fellowship brimming with love, honesty, open-mindedness or willingness. We reached the point where we could no longer continue because of physical, mental, and spiritual pain. When we were beaten, we became willing.

Our inability to control our usage of drugs is a symptom of the disease of addiction. We are powerless not only over drugs, but our addiction as well. We need to admit this in order to recover. Addiction is a physical, mental and spiritual disease, affecting every area of our lives.

The physical aspect of our disease is the compulsive use of drugs: the inability to stop using once we have started. The mental aspect of our disease is the obsession, or overpowering desire, which leads us to using even when it has destroyed our lives. The spiritual part of our disease is our total self-centeredness. We felt that we could stop whenever we wanted to, despite all evidence to the contrary. Denial, substitution, rationalization, justification, distrust of others, guilt, embarrassment, dereliction, degradation, isolation, and loss of control are all results of our disease. Our disease is progressive, incurable and fatal. Most of us

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are relieved to find out we have a disease instead of a moral deficiency.

We are not responsible for our disease, but we are responsible for our recovery. Most of us tried to stop using on our own, but we were unable to live with or without drugs. Eventually we realized that we were powerless over our addiction.

Many of us tried to stop using on sheer willpower, and this turned out to be a temporary solution. We saw that willpower alone would not work for any length of time. We tried countless other remedies- psychiatrists, hospitals, recovery houses, lovers, new towns, new jobs. Everything we tried, failed. We began to see that we had rationalized the most outrageous sort of nonsense in order to justify the mess drugs had made of our lives.

Until we let go of all our reservations, the foundation on which our recovery is based is in danger. Reservations, no matter what they are, rob us of obtaining all the benefits this program has to offer. In ridding ourselves of all reservations, we surrender. Then, and only then, can we be helped to recover from the disease of addiction.

Now, the question is: "If we are powerless, how can Narcotics Anonymous help?" We begin by asking for help, and this is accomplished by working the Twelve Steps. The foundation is the admission that we, of ourselves, have no power over addiction. When we can accept this, we have completed the first part of Step One.

A second admission must be made before the foundation is complete. If we stop here, we will know only half the truth. We are great ones for manipulating the truth. We might say on one hand, "Yes, I am powerless over my addiction," and on the other hand, "When I get my life together, I can handle drugs." Such thoughts and actions led us back to active addiction. It never occurred to us to ask, "If we can't control our addiction, how can we control our lives?" We felt miserable without drugs.

Unemployability, dereliction and destruction are easily seen as characteristics of an unmanageable life. Our families generally are disappointed, baffled and confused by our actions and often have deserted or disowned us. Becoming employed, socially acceptable and reunited with our families does not make our lives manageable. Social acceptability does not equal recovery.

We have found that we had no choice except to completely change our old ways of thinking or go back to using. When we give our best, it works for us as it has worked for others. When we could no longer stand

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our old ways, we began to change. From that point forward, we can see that every clean day is a successful day, no matter what happens. Surrender means not having to fight anymore. We accept our addiction and live the way it is. We become willing to do whatever is necessary to stay clean, even the things we don't like doing.

Until we took Step One, we were full of fear and doubt. At this point, many of us felt lost and confused. We felt different. Upon working this step, we affirmed our surrender to the principles of Narcotics Anonymous, and only then did we begin to overcome the alienation of addiction. Help for addicts begins only when we are able to admit complete defeat. This can be frightening, but it is the foundation on which we have built our lives.

Step One means that we do not have to use, and this is a great freedom. It took a while for some of us to realize how unmanageable our lives had become; for others of us, this was the only thing of which we could be sure. We knew in our hearts that drugs had the power to change us into something that we didn't want to be.

Being clean and working this step, we are released from our chains. However, none of the steps work by magic. We do not just say the words of this step; we learn to live them. We see for ourselves that the Program has something to offer us.

We have found hope. We find that we can learn to function in the world we live in. We, too, can find meaning and purpose in life and be rescued from insanity, depravity and death.

When we admit our powerlessness and inability to manage our own lives, we open the door for a Power greater than ourselves to help us. It is not where we were that counts, but where we are going.

### Fourth Edition

#### STEP ONE

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

It doesn't matter what or how much we used. In Narcotics Anonymous staying clean has to come first. We realize that we cannot use drugs and live. When we admit our powerlessness and the inability to manage our own lives, we open the door to recovery. No one could convince us that we were addicts. It is an admission that we had to make for ourselves. When some of us have doubts, we ask ourselves this question: "Can I control my use of any form of mind or mood-altering chemicals?"

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This would clearly suggest that an addict has no control over drugs. Powerlessness means using against our will. If we can't stop, how can we tell ourselves we are in control? The inability to stop using, even with the greatest willpower and the most sincere desire, is what we mean when we say, "We have absolutely no choice." However, we do have a choice after we eliminate all the things we have been telling ourselves to justify our using. **However we do have a choice after we stop trying to justify our using.**

We didn't stumble into this Fellowship brimming with love, honesty, open-mindedness or willingness. We reached the point where we could no longer continue because of physical, mental, and spiritual pain. When we were beaten, we became willing.

Our inability to control our usage of drugs is a symptom of the disease of addiction. We are powerless not only over drugs, but our addiction as well. We need to admit this in order to recover. Addiction is a physical, mental and spiritual disease, affecting every area of our lives.

The physical aspect of our disease is the compulsive use of drugs: the inability to stop using once we have started. The mental aspect of our disease is the obsession, or overpowering desire, which leads us to using even when it has destroyed our lives.

**The mental aspect of our disease is the obsession, or overpowering desire to use, even when we are destroying our lives.**

The spiritual part of our disease is our total self-centeredness. We felt that we could stop whenever we wanted to, despite all evidence to the contrary. Denial, substitution, rationalization, justification, distrust of others, guilt, embarrassment, dereliction, degradation, isolation, and loss of control are all results of our disease. Our disease is progressive, incurable and fatal. Most of us are relieved to find out we have a disease instead of a moral deficiency. **(DELETE)**

We are not responsible for our disease, but we are responsible for our recovery. Most of us tried to stop using on our own, but we were unable to live with or without drugs. Eventually we realized that we were powerless over our addiction.

Many of us tried to stop using on sheer willpower, and this turned out to be a temporary solution. We saw that willpower alone would not work for any length of time. We tried countless other remedies- psychiatrists, hospitals, recovery houses, lovers, new towns, new jobs. Everything we

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tried, failed. We began to see that we had rationalized the most outrageous sort of nonsense in order to justify the mess drugs had made of our lives. We began to see that we had rationalized the most outrageous sort of nonsense to justify the mess that we made of our lives with drugs.

Until we let go of all our reservations, the foundation on which our recovery is based is in danger. Until we let go of our reservations, no matter what they are, the foundation of our recovery is in danger. Reservations, no matter what they are, rob us of obtaining all the benefits this program has to offer. Reservations rob us of the benefits that this program has to offer. In ridding ourselves of all reservations, we surrender. Then, and only then, can we be helped to recover from the disease of addiction.

Now, the question is: "If we are powerless, how can Narcotics Anonymous help?" We begin by asking for help, and this is accomplished by working the Twelve Steps. (DELETED AND THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED BY WORKING THE TWELVE STEPS) The foundation is the admission that we, of ourselves, have no power over addiction. When we can accept this, we have completed the first part of Step One.

A second admission must be made before the foundation is complete. If we stop here, we will know only half the truth. We are great ones for manipulating the truth. We might (DELETE) say on one hand, "Yes, I am powerless over my addiction," and on the other hand, "When I get my life together, I can handle drugs." Such thoughts and actions led us back to active addiction. It never occurred to us to ask, "If we can't control our addiction, how can we control our lives?" We felt miserable without drugs and our lives were unmanageable. (ADDED)

Unemployability, dereliction and destruction are easily seen as characteristics of an unmanageable life. Our families generally are disappointed, baffled and confused by our actions and often have deserted or disowned us. Becoming employed, socially acceptable and reunited with our families does not make our lives manageable. Social acceptability does not equal recovery.

We have found that we had no choice except to completely change our old ways of thinking or go back to using. When we give our best, it works for us as it has worked for others. When we could no longer stand our old ways, we began to change. From that point forward, we can see that every clean day is a successful day, no matter what happens. From that point forward, we began to see that every clean day is a successful day, no matter what happens. Surrender means not having to fight anymore. We accept our addiction and life the way it is. We become willing to do whatever is necessary to stay clean, even the things we don't like doing.



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Until we took Step One, we were full of fear and doubt. At this point, many of us felt lost and confused. We felt different. Upon working this step, we affirmed our surrender to the principles of Narcotics Anonymous, and only then did we begin to overcome the alienation of addiction. Help for addicts begins only when we are able to admit complete defeat. This can be frightening, but it is the foundation on which we have built our lives.

Step One means that we do not have to use, and this is a great freedom. It took a while for some of us to realize how unmanageable our lives had become; for others of us, this was the only thing of which we could be sure. It took a while for some of us to realize that our lives had become unmanageable. For others, the unmanageability of their lives was the only thing that was clear.

We knew in our hearts that drugs had the power to change us into something that we didn't want to be.

Being clean and working this step, we are released from our chains. However, none of the steps work by magic. We do not just say the words of this step; we learn to live them. We see for ourselves that the Program has something to offer us.

We have found hope. We find that we can learn to function in the world we live in. We can learn to function in the world in which we live. We, too, can find meaning and purpose in life and be rescued from insanity, depravity and death. We can find meaning and purpose in life and be rescued from insanity, depravity and death.

When we admit our powerlessness and inability to manage our own lives, we open the door for a Power greater than ourselves to help us. It is not where we were that counts, but where we are going.

5<sup>th</sup> Edition, and 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

### STEP ONE

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

It doesn't matter what or how much we used. In Narcotics Anonymous, staying clean has to come first. We realize that we cannot use drugs and live. When we admit our powerlessness and our inability to manage our own lives, we open the door to recovery. No one could convince us that we were addicts. It is an admission that we have to make for ourselves. When some of us have doubts, we ask ourselves this question: “Can I control my use of any form of mind or mood-altering chemicals?”

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Most addicts (ADDED) will see that control is impossible the moment it is suggested.

Whatever the outcome, we find that we cannot control our using for any length of time.

This would clearly suggest that an addict has no control over drugs.

Powerlessness means using drugs (ADDED) against our will. If we can't stop using, (ADDED) how can we tell ourselves we are in control? The inability to stop using,

even with the greatest willpower and the most sincere desire, is what we mean when we say, "We have absolutely no choice." However, we do have a choice after we stop trying to justify our using.

We didn't stumble into this Fellowship brimming with love, honesty, open-mindedness or willingness. We reached a point where we could no longer continue using (ADDED) because of physical, mental, and spiritual pain. When we were beaten, we became willing.

Our inability to control our usage of drugs is a symptom of the disease of addiction. We are powerless not only over drugs, but over our addiction as well. We need to admit this fact in order to recover. Addiction is a physical, mental and spiritual disease that affects every area of our lives.

The physical aspect of our disease is the compulsive use of drugs: the inability to stop using once we have started. The mental aspect of our disease is the obsession, or overpowering desire to use, even when we are destroying our lives. The spiritual part of our disease is our total self-centeredness. We felt that we could stop whenever we wanted to, despite all evidence to the contrary. Denial, substitution, rationalization, justification, distrust of others, guilt, embarrassment, dereliction, degradation, isolation, and loss of control are all results of our disease. Our disease is progressive, incurable and fatal. Most of us are relieved to find out we have a disease instead of a moral deficiency. (REINSERTED from 3<sup>rd</sup> Revised)

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failed. We began to see that we had rationalized the most outrageous sort of nonsense to justify the mess that we made of our lives with drugs.

Until we let go of our reservations, no matter what they are, the foundation of our recovery is in danger. Reservations rob us of the benefits that this program has to offer. In ridding ourselves of all reservations, we surrender. Then, and only then, can we be helped to recover from the disease of addiction.

Now, the question is: "If we are powerless, how can Narcotics Anonymous help?" We begin by asking for help. The foundation of our program (ADDED) is the admission that we, of ourselves, do not have have no power over addiction. When we can accept this fact, we have completed the first part of Step One.

A second admission must be made before our foundation is complete. If we stop here, we will know only half the truth. We are great ones for manipulating the truth. We say on one hand, "Yes, I am powerless over my addiction," and on the other hand, "When I get my life together, I can handle drugs." Such thoughts and actions led us back to active addiction.

(PARAGRAPH SEPARATED)

It never occurred to us to ask, "If we can't control our addiction, how can we control our lives?" We felt miserable without drugs, and our lives were unmanageable.

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Until we took Step One, we were full of fear and doubt. At this point, many of us felt lost and confused. We felt different. Upon working this step, we affirmed our surrender to the principles of N.A. Only after surrender are we able to overcome the alienation of addiction. Upon working this step, we affirmed our surrender to the principles of Narcotics Anonymous, and only then did we begin to overcome the alienation of addiction. Help for addicts begins only when we are able to admit complete

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