

The
SOBER LIVING
WORKBOOK
for
Partners in Recovery

by Mabel Dean

I hope you find “The Sober Living Workbook” helpful. It provides practical information that enables people to create and live their best life!

I need your help spreading the word!

Tell your friends about it and share it with professionals such as counselors, family therapists and addiction specialists.

(See the very last page.)

Post your enthusiasm for the book on social media and refer folks to the website. Mention that it is free and there is no charge for downloading.

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Dear Reader:

The fact that you are reading this book suggests that you are interested in bringing sober living to your life and making the recovery process work for you and your family. So welcome to the world of recovery!

This book is based on my own experiences and observations, successes and failures. It provides you with many opportunities to explore the recovery process in depth. This book is a workbook just for you and your partner - to start you thinking about what is happening to you right now.

Recovery is a healing process. It's like getting better from other illnesses. It doesn't happen in a week or a month. In fact, recovery from substance abuse is much like recovering from a stroke or heart attack, or an accident where a part of your body has been permanently damaged. It requires changing your lifestyle to eliminate the toxic substances and finding satisfying ways to live with the disease. Recovery involves both partners since both lives are impacted.

The words "changing your lifestyle" are easy to write and say, but they are very hard to put into action. I say that from experience - the experience of my own recovery from a lifelong depression and codependency. It wasn't until I reached my "bottom," in the course of coping with my husband's recovery from alcohol addiction, that I began to find myself.

I did not realize that our new sober lifestyle would require me to embark on a recovery program. My husband was the identified "user." He needed the treatment - not me.

Now I know that my ways of dealing with life were the perfect complement to my addictive partner. I needed my own recovery program if we were to continue our marriage. Recovery is like any other healthful activity - you must practice it just like you practice eating well and exercising regularly. The day you stop, you start slipping backwards.

Our sober life started when my husband admitted himself to an in-patient alcohol recovery program. Part of the program involved support for family members and I was encouraged to participate. Once each week we would meet with a counselor to talk about how our partner's addiction impacted our own lives. It was during these discussions that I became aware of how hard it was for me to talk about my feelings. So I began using my pen to find my own voice - first keeping a journal and later writing this book.

I learned that honesty is one of the most important keys to recovery. At the core of a good partnership are truth and trust. Once those elements exist between two people, there is a foundation for a relationship. It is only then, that you can accept the other person as they are - without trying to make them into what you want them

to be. When truth and trust are present there is no need to keep secrets or to be concerned about control - or being controlled. You can talk openly about issues as they come up.

If you are not honest with yourself, the truth will keep you imprisoned in your old ways. Until you are truthful with yourself, you will never be able to trust yourself. And if you can't trust yourself, you probably can't trust others either - and that includes your partner!

As I look back on the time when my partner was actively drinking, I realize that I had very little trust in myself. I didn't know my own truth. I didn't value myself or the way I lived my life. I let my husband set the pace for our relationship. I thought I was being such a good partner - doing whatever was needed to make our marriage work. I took on the responsibility for its success and its failure. If something was wrong, surely I could fix it. I got very upset when things didn't go right. I got angry at my partner for being so out of it. At the time I didn't know it was anger - I just felt frustrated and incompetent. But I kept right on trying to be "Little Miss Perfect" - to keep everything under control. I made the best I could of a bad situation, and in the process I took very good care of everything but me!

Fortunately, I changed. I have learned that I am responsible for creating a good life for myself. I've acknowledged my talents. Once I used those talents to cope - now I put them to work for me! I speak my own truth, own my feelings, and express my needs. I've learned that when I am truthful with myself, I am able to trust myself and that gives me great personal power to take responsibility for my own life.

When my partner was using, he was hiding his truth in his alcohol. I know now that I never really knew him, and he never got to know me either. The drug was at the core of our relationship with ourselves and each other. It prevented us from having any sort of intimacy.

Looking back at those early months of recovery, I realize that our marriage could have easily dissolved. Fortunately we got help and we "toughed it out" - and instead of separating and going in own directions, we faced the challenges of learning to live in partnership.

Now I see that recovery is best accomplished in the context of a relationship. There were many times when I wanted to leave. It would have been so much easier. But as I learned to face the truth about myself and my partner and we began to be able to trust each other, we found our common ground and came to honor each other for the unique human beings we are. I don't believe our recovery would have been successful had we tried to do it without working on our relationship at the same time.

When I wrote the first draft of this book back in the 90's - over thirty years ago, I had no idea that it would still be relevant today. My employer had given me a sabbatical to develop the manuscript. Soon after that we moved to Tucson, Arizona, to begin our new life. The manuscript sat in my file cabinet as we developed new interests, traveled the world, and engaged in our new life.

In 2016 my husband died after a short illness. As I was clearing out our storage shed I found the manuscript and after reading it, realized it was as pertinent today as it was back when I was writing it. I thought it should be shared in some way. I decided to update the manuscript and make it available online for downloading. It is my gift to you and your partner with the hope that you find it helpful in the challenging but very worthwhile endeavor of creating and living a sober life.

May this mark the beginning of an exciting next chapter of your life.

Mabel Dean, Recovering Codependent
Tucson, Arizona
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Starting Your Sober Life

A successful recovery process involves reflecting on your past life, acknowledging your present situation, and planning for your future. It involves total self-honesty as you explore the past and contemplate your future.

This book introduces basic information about the recovery process and includes a series of worksheets developed to help you explore your own unique recovery process. Each worksheet takes you on a short “thought provoking trip” that explores your feelings about some area or concept related to your life that has brought you to this point. Your responses will give you the opportunity to dig deep and heal by finding new ways to embrace your future.

You and your partner can become each other’s “witness” and “cheerleader” - your best friend and supporter. This is a unique opportunity for you to build trust in yourselves and each other. I invite you to openly share your experiences and revelations. Refrain from judgement and jumping to conclusions. Remember this is a time for reflection and analysis in order to bring about change.

It is very important for both of you to develop your listening skills so that you can feel safe being completely honest when you are expressing your true feelings - no matter how hard it may be to refrain from judgments of the past. Here’s where it can be helpful to work with a trained counselor if you are having issues with self expression and acceptance.

Developing and practicing compassionate listening skills and responses will enable you both to support each other and build a strong relationship.

At this moment you may be feeling alone and overwhelmed. You may be wondering how you are going to cope. I encourage you to keep an open mind and explore your options. You will recover from all this, but it will be a much easier and more productive process if you use the help that is available to you.

How to Use this Workbook

This workbook is designed to help you deal with the lifestyle changes that you and your partner will be undertaking during the first year of your recovery process. It contains carefully constructed worksheets that will aid you and your partner as you create a sober life together.

Part 1 “Becoming Sober” deals with the basic recovery process and ways partners can confront recovery straight-on simultaneously. It offers helpful strategies for developing new ways of relating to each other by respecting each other’s process and developing strong communication skills.

Part 2 “Living Sober” helps you to adjust your personal and family life and implement strategies for healthy living addiction-free.

Part 3 “Resources” details a number of ways to learn more about recovery online and within your community. You will discover how to get help and you will be guided to explore a variety of strategies that will enable you to examine important issues and feelings.

The first weeks and months of sobriety are a new experience for most people. Sobriety becomes the main focus of your life. Partners often find it helpful to discuss the topics on the next page early in the experience. Sometimes you will find that you both agree easily about how you want to deal with a particular topic. Other times you will find there may be disagreement, in which case you might want to consider working with a counselor to develop a plan for how you will deal with a particular issue.

Discussing The Impact of Sobriety

When my husband got out of the hospital, the first point he made was that the MOST IMPORTANT thing in his life was HIS SOBRIETY. He went on to further clarify that he would not tolerate being around any person or any thing that would pose a threat to his sobriety. And that included me! This was his truth. I fully accepted that his sobriety came first - even before me. From that day forward, I never had a drink in his presence as my way of showing complete support for his sobriety.

I was relieved that he was sober. I wanted to be helpful, but the message I was getting from him was for me to keep my distance. I wasn't sure what my role should be or what I should be doing, and I was terrified of what might happen if he started to drink again.

Before he left the hospital we had agreed that we would not have alcohol in our home and we would inform any invited guests that our home was alcohol-free. We agreed that we would not "hide" the fact that he was an alcoholic, nor would we announce it.

If you haven't already discussed these topics, it's very important that you do so now. You need a plan in place so you are in sync when these issues and situations come up.

- Keeping alcohol and drugs in the house.
- Serving alcohol to guests.
- Attending events where alcohol is served.
- Attending or avoiding family celebrations where alcohol is served.
- Attending dinner parties where alcohol is served.
- Telling others about your addiction.

We had these discussions early on and we had a plan in place to use when necessary. For instance, we agreed that if we were at a party where either one of us was uncomfortable with the presence of alcohol and/or drug use, we would quietly leave as a couple - no questions asked. You're going to laugh as I reveal that we even practiced what we would say if the situation arose.

I had a standard approach I used when I was inviting folks to our home for a meal. I explained that my husband was a recovering alcoholic and we had an alcohol-free home. I asked that they not bring any alcoholic gifts and that we would understand if they preferred to dine with us at a restaurant where they could have drinks with their meal.

Exploring With Worksheets

The worksheets in this book have no “right” answers because your situation is unique. They are designed to stimulate your thinking about a variety of topics related to sobriety and healthy, happy living. In the early weeks of recovery more than likely your mind is focused on getting through the day and worrying about what will happen next and how it will affect you and your family.

Most of the worksheets present information or contain a series of questions that will help you think deeply about a specific topic related to your recovery or your relationship with your partner or family. They are designed to get you thinking and feeling about things that are easily ignored in early recovery. Hopefully they will help you find your way through the experience.

When you are using the worksheets, write what comes to mind. Don't hold back and don't write what you think you should be thinking. Be candid and honest with yourself and on the page. This way you become a witness to your own thoughts and can work with your responses.

Many of the exercises encourage “partner discussion.” By sharing your thoughts and feelings and listening to your partner's feedback, you can use these recovery experiences to build a strong relationship. You may find that your relationship takes on a new dimension of intimacy when you learn how to be open and honest and non-judgmental.

I suggest you work with copies of the worksheets. Take yourself to a private corner of your home and spend some time thinking about the material presented. Fill in the blanks and then decide what, if any, action you want to take next. Think about what came up for you and what you might do to deal with it. Identify what kind of help you need to find for yourself, and what kind of help you need from your partner.

Recovery is a “testing” period for relationships because there are so many changes taking place. You can use this time to create a strong partnership by openly sharing your thoughts, feelings, and fears as you live through this experience together. But I caution you - this only works if you and your partner agree on basic ground rules - the most important one being to LISTEN to what is said and to REFRAIN FROM JUDGEMENT during your discussions. The next page provides some fundamental ground rules that will help you enjoy productive discussion and sharing.

Remember:

- There are no right or wrong answers.
- If you are having difficulty expressing yourself, take a break.
- Some worksheets are designed for you and your partner to discuss. Invite them to do the exercise so that you can share your thoughts, but please honor their refusal if they choose not to participate.
- You don't have to show your worksheets to anyone.
- If an exercise brings up disturbing thoughts or issues, you may want to discuss them with your sponsor, a friend or a counselor.

Deepening Awareness Through Journaling

I suggest that you use a personal journal to further explore your thoughts and feelings. My journal has been my best friend on this journey. It's where I go when I need to have a conversation with myself. I use it to try to gain perspective when I am experiencing extreme feelings and to figure out my best solution. These can be feelings of abandonment, being misunderstood, being angry or being happy. I often use my journal to write about a situation that has made me feel uncomfortable. And I also use it to "dump" negative thoughts and feelings when I feel I've messed up or been treated poorly or misunderstood. This is my favorite way to bring thoughts to awareness so I can deal with them.

I use a spiral bound thin lined college style notebook, and lovingly refer to it as my "garbage dump" as I deposit everything I'm feeling onto the page. As part of the experience I ask myself for help and continue writing whatever comes to mind. I'm always surprised by the insights and solutions that appear - things I would never have thought about in my super-charged state.

The key to journaling for anxiety is to keep on writing whatever is on your mind. You must write it on the paper, without judgement, so that it can emerge. I try to write continuously without stopping for at least 20 minutes. If I don't know what to write next, then I write "I don't know what to write about right now because....," and that usually brings me to writing about what is really going on in my unconscious mind.

This technique requires that you be totally honest with yourself and put down every ugly, stupid, meaningless thought on the page. If you practice this rigorous and honest recording, your inner voice will come through for you with whatever you need to know at the moment.

When we journal in this way we are asking our higher power for help. And so far my higher power has never let me down. When I finish the session I almost always feel relieved and refreshed and ready for whatever I need to do next.

Note: Your journal is for your eyes only! Stash it away where it can't be found by others.

Part 1

Becoming Sober

1. Getting Help

Personally, I don't think it is possible to have a good relationship with an addicted partner who refuses treatment. This book is written with the premise that together, you and your partner want to remove the addiction that is contaminating your lives. If the user continues with their addiction, their partner is faced with the decision to terminate the relationship or find a positive way to continue in the relationship.

The first step in becoming sober is for the user to decide they are willing to stop using. The partner can not make them stop. That's the hard part of this whole problem. Your partner has to decide to stop on their own.

"Stop" is a "loaded" word. It is not something most people can do without help.

The first weeks are very challenging for the user. Their body has become accustomed to the presence of the drug, and when it is not present, the user will most likely experience significant withdrawal discomfort and may require medical help.

Help for The User

The only way to get sober is to stop using the drug of choice. It is not easy. You've probably tried to quit before, but your body's craving for the drug takes over, and you feel the only way to deal with the pain is to keep using. In this book, the term "user" refers to the person in the relationship who is addicted. Addiction to any substance is a difficult habit to halt. Very few people are able to stop using on their own successfully.

The withdrawal process is painful. Most likely, you will need some form of medical assistance to deal with both the physical pain and anxiety. Don't surrender to the drug one more time. Instead, go to the emergency room and ask for help. At that time, be sure to get information identifying community resources that can help support your sobriety. You may be referred to a residential or outpatient recovery program and most likely told to go to a 12-Step meeting.

Don't hesitate to search the internet for meetings and support. There are many in-person and online meetings all over the country, and many counselors offer online, group, and individual sessions.

Detoxing

When you stop using your drug of choice, you may experience withdrawal symptoms that require medical treatment because they are so painful and uncomfortable. Withdrawal can produce a medical emergency as the body has become acclimated to the presence of the drug. Attempting to quit without the aid of medical treatment often results in a hasty return to using because withdrawal symptoms are too great.

It is hard to predict how a user will function in the first 24-72 hours of detox. For this reason, it is best to detox in a medical setting where you can receive the withdrawal support you need from a trained physician. Many users go to the local emergency room for detox relief. There, hospital social workers will provide follow-up information and suggest resources for further treatment.

Resources for Help

Once you have definitely decided to stop using, you can get help in several ways. These resources can help you detox safely and then direct you to your next steps. If you are able to stop using without severe withdrawal symptoms, a good place to start is by contacting local 12-Step organizations and getting to a meeting ASAP. If you are experiencing physical withdrawal symptoms, it is advisable to go directly to your closest emergency room (ER).

1. Call a Crisis Line.

When you call a community crisis line, they will ask you questions and either refer you to the ER or connect you with an outpatient rehab program. Your immediate safety is their first concern.

2. Go to the hospital.

If you call the hospital, they will ask you basic information and determine if you are having a medical emergency or if you are stable enough to go directly to the inpatient detox/rehab unit. The hospital can also connect you with private outpatient rehab resources but you will need to go in first to be evaluated. In most cases they will tell you to go to an ER.

In the ER you will be medically evaluated, speak with a social worker about options, achieve a normal blood alcohol/drug level and then decide if you would like to be admitted to an in-patient, out-patient or a residential rehab program.

Legally you cannot be admitted to any detox/rehab unless you are under the legal limit for alcohol/drugs and are able to consent. If you are over the limit when you check in to the ER, you will have to stay in there until you are under the limit. During that time, it is common to receive fluids and medicine to help you feel calmer and more comfortable. You will not be asked to make any binding decisions until you are “legally” sober.

What to bring to the hospital:

- I.D.
- Cell phone and charger
- Change of clothes
- Insurance card (if you have one)
- Notepad and pen to take notes if necessary

What NOT to not bring to the hospital:

- A lot of personal items; they will be secured in a separate area and held until you leave so you won't have them with you anyway.
- Any type of drugs, alcohol or weapons.
- Medications. If you have medications that you take daily, let the nurse and doctor know when you arrive and the hospital will provide them during your stay. Do not take them with you because they will be taken away and mailed back to your home, which can be delayed.

A note on insurance: Generally, most health insurance will cover emergency services through the ER. Once there, you can inquire about coverage for in-patient hospital detox. Coverage may vary for private rehab programs.

3. Attend a local 12-Step meeting and ask for help.

12-Step groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and Nar-Anon are organizations with a national presence, but the heartbeat of the work they do is local. In most communities, each organization sponsors a number of regularly scheduled meetings that take place at convenient times and locations.

The model for these organizations involves working a 12-Step program. Meetings are member-run so they vary greatly. Members can give you a good overview of your options. Some members offer to take on the role of "sponsor" to help those in early recovery. It's best to visit several different meetings so that you can find one that fits your needs.

Meetings are open and free to anyone who shows up and are based on the premise of anonymity. You can find information about local meetings online or by calling your local group office.

4. Admit yourself directly to a 30-day residential or out-patient treatment program (often covered by health insurance).

In-patient residential treatment facilities

Residential treatment centers offer 30-day rehabilitation programs designed to stabilize the user during the first weeks of sobriety. Some programs may be covered by your health insurance.

Outpatient treatment programs

Some recovering individuals prefer to attend daily or weekly sessions conducted by a trained professional. This is less costly than a residential program and suitable for individuals who are unable or unwilling to commit to a residential program.

5. Meet with a pastor for counseling and advice.

Often local churches have recovery group meetings sponsored by 12-Step organizations.

6. Meet with a counselor or therapist who can refer you to appropriate treatment resources.

Some individuals prefer to work directly with a therapist who specializes in addiction. They offer regular sessions (individual or group) that may be covered by health insurance.

7. Ask for a referral through your employer's employee assistance program.

This help is confidential and should in no way impact your job security. Addiction is considered a medical condition and employees have specific legal protections in most states.

Help For Partners

While your partner is busy getting and staying sober one day at a time, you need to think about what you need to get yourself through the weeks and months ahead. Your partner will be focusing on developing a network to support their sobriety.

It is essential to realize that your partner's addiction and sobriety belong to them and that you can not fix them. Accepting this requires breaking patterns of caregiving that have served you both well in the past. Counseling can be an invaluable tool to help you shift from codependent to independent/self-dependent in your relationship.

My husband chose to enter a 30-day residential recovery program at a local hospital. The program included support for family members, which I attended and found very helpful. After he was discharged, we both participated in a weekly family support therapy group. I also worked directly with my own counselor.

Many of us turn to counselors in these early days to explore emotions of anger, frustration, neglect, and despair that can rise quickly and cause conflict. Counseling can help you take positive steps toward healthily rebuilding your relationship. This frees you from the responsibility of managing your partner and allows you the space to focus on your own needs.

About this time, you may be thinking, "I'm not the user. Why do I need help?" There are organizations such as Al-Anon that offer 12-Step programs that specifically support families of recovering addicts. They have a wide network of weekly meetings throughout the country. Attending a weekly group gave me insight into the disease of alcoholism, my marriage, and what to expect as a partner of a recovering alcoholic. We all have areas where we can become healthier, and having a community of supporters who understood my strife proved deeply comforting. Most communities have a variety of support groups that hold regular meetings.

Several national organizations provide help through telephone counseling, websites, and online meetings. The list below provides a starting point for exploring what is available to help you and your partner. If you don't have access to the internet, go to a public library where a librarian can help you.

You may choose to go to your church or spiritual center and ask about support groups and services that they offer. Finally, you may find it useful to check out some of the resources at the end of this book, which can help you look at your life in new and insightful ways. Whatever you choose, know that you do not have to do this alone.

Counseling Help:

- Licensed counselors
- Clergy
- Employee Assistant Programs

Therapy:

- Licensed therapists
- Clinical Psychologist

12-Step Programs:

- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Al-Anon

Groups:

- Therapy groups
- Self-Help groups
- Church discussion groups
- Friendship groups

Other:

The Resources Section at the end of this book details many sources of information on substance abuse and recovery.

2. Why 12-Step Meetings

For the User

Attending meetings is a critical element of a recovery plan. Your partner may go to meetings as frequently as several times a day in the early stages of recovery. When my partner was discharged from his 30-day program, it was recommended that he attend ninety meetings in ninety days. This seemed like a lot. If he missed a day, he was encouraged to double up the following day.

Why so many meetings? There are several reasons. One of the most important reasons is that it is a way of filling time that used to be spent using their drug of choice. Another reason is to be around people who are going through or have been through the experience. They understand what is happening, and they will support you. Finally, it's important to hear the stories and to learn the language and the recovery methods. In the beginning, you feel out of place - a stranger. But if you keep going back, you will begin to feel like you belong, and you can take strength from the group.

My husband was committed to maintaining his sobriety and, while he was in the hospital, had acknowledged his lack of control over his life. This made it possible for him to accept the wisdom of others when they suggested he go to ninety meetings in ninety days.

After 3 months (90 days), he tapered off to 3 or 4 meetings a week, and for the following five years, he attended meetings weekly. Once in a while, I would go along to a meeting with him. I found it helpful to listen to the speakers talk about their disease. It reminded me that my partner was an alcoholic for life. Sometimes I would forget because living sober together, we had built a very satisfying normal life. On Christmas Day, we set up a tradition of going to a 12-Step meeting together to express our gratitude for the program that helped his recovery.

Meetings begin with someone reading the "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions." Every time I heard them, I was reminded of the daily attention recovery requires. Listening to people with years of sobriety talk about relapses and hearing about their frustrations and anger reminded me of this reality.

It was important to recognize that we lived daily with the fact that my husband was an alcoholic in remission and that relapse was just one drink away. Alcoholics Anonymous provided him with a special love and support that can only come from the bond of a fellowship from those who are traveling the same road.

I do not recommend going to 12-Step meetings with your partner because the meetings are targeted to the specific needs of users. Instead, go to meetings for partners of recovering alcoholics and addicts. As a partner in recovery, you can benefit from meetings as much as your partner.

Through the meetings, attendees have the opportunity to find a sponsor. This person is an integral part of the recovery process. Sponsors are members who have maintained sobriety by working the 12-Steps. They are a confidant whom you can call on at any time and are there to help you work your 12-Step program and encourage you. A sponsor can be a lifeline helping you get through difficult times when you are tempted to relapse or when you feel your world is falling apart. I encourage you to find a sponsor to guide you through your recovery experience.

For the Partner

There are support opportunities available to you, the most popular of which is Al-Anon, which uses a 12-Step format. Their meetings are peer-led and offer mutual support to those living with or in a relationship with individuals suffering from the effects of substance abuse. They are open to all and have no dues or fees. Groups meet weekly, and each has its own unique feel, so it might take several different meetings before you find the one that feels right to you.

The central focus of a 12-Step group is to encourage participants to live their own life with serenity and make healthy choices regardless of what others may do. This is sometimes challenging. Having group support and the support of a sponsor who can guide you through the twelve steps is key. Everything said at meetings or discussed with a sponsor is kept confidential, creating a feeling of safety to express complete honesty about your experiences.

A dear friend told me how very welcoming her Al-Anon group was. It gave her an opportunity to talk about things she couldn't tell others. In the beginning, I was very nervous at my first Al-Anon meeting but slowly began to look forward to what I would hear because I was gently being led back to focusing on myself and how to create the best life for me. I met some truly wonderful people at these meetings. (Similar groups such as Nar-Anon follow the same premise. Check local listings in your area if your partner is addicted to drugs.)

Finding 12-Step Meetings

1. Search the internet for 12-Step meetings in your area. You can also call the Alcoholics Anonymous (Al-Anon or Nar-Anon) national number to locate local resources.
2. Get details about the time and address of local meetings that are most convenient for you.
3. Commit to finding a meeting to attend regularly. Use the worksheet on the next page to plan the meetings you will visit. Select three meetings to attend this week and write in the address, day, and time of the ones you plan to check out.

Note: Do not judge all meetings by the first meeting you attend. Each meeting has a unique feeling created by the people who regularly attend the meeting. Any single meeting can be impacted by the particular mix of people in attendance. If the location and time are convenient for you, give the meeting several chances before you cross it off your list. You will eventually find the meeting(s) where you feel comfortable. The important thing is to keep “shopping.”

Attending a 12-Step Meeting

1. Take a small notebook and pencil with you so you can take notes.
2. When you get there, introduce yourself using your first name. The meetings are anonymous so last names are not used. Explain that you are a newly recovering user and have come to learn more about the program.
3. Nothing is expected from you other than that you maintain your sobriety during the meeting and refrain from argumentative behavior.
4. Most people experience a sincere and warm welcome. They have walked your path and want you to be successful.
5. You may find a member offering to talk with you directly. Get their phone number and if time permits, join them for coffee and share your experience. Down the road, you may find that a person you met at a meeting is one of your most helpful advocates.

When you return home, take a few minutes to complete the “12-Step Meeting Evaluation” using the worksheet on the next page.

12-Step Meeting Evaluation Worksheet

Meeting Day: _____ Time: _____ Address: _____

Circle those that apply

Did you feel comfortable being there?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Sort of

How worthwhile did you find the meeting?

☐

Great

☐

OK

☐

Fair

☐

Not for Me

Was the meeting:

☐

Helpful

☐

Informative

☐

Comforting

☐

Other: _____

What issues concern you most right now?

What was most helpful?

What was least helpful?

12-Step Meeting Evaluation Worksheet

Meeting Day: _____ Time: _____ Address: _____

Circle those that apply

Did you feel comfortable being there?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Sort of

How worthwhile did you find the meeting?

☐

Great

☐

OK

☐

Fair

☐

Not for Me

Was the meeting:

☐

Helpful

☐

Informative

☐

Comforting

☐

Other: _____

What issues concern you most right now?

What was most helpful?

What was least helpful?

12-Steps - A Way of Life

The 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

- Step One:** We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
- Step Two:** Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- Step Three:** Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.
- Step Four:** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- Step Five:** Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- Step Six:** Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- Step Seven:** Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
- Step Eight:** Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
- Step Nine:** Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- Step Ten:** Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- Step Eleven:** 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.
- Step Twelve:** Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The 12 Steps are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

For most people, recovery means working a 12-Step program. It certainly was important for both my partner and me. At the core of all 12-Step programs is the concept of surrender and turning your life over to a “higher power.”

By giving control of my life to my higher power, I found it much easier to cope with troublesome issues. They once caused me problems and pain, but once I was able to accept them, my strong need to be in charge transformed into an ability to accept those elements of life that are beyond human control. For me, this became an exciting and wonderful spiritual transformation.

3. Weekly Recovery Planning

For these first weeks of early recovery you're both going to be very busy, each working on your individual recovery program. Hopefully your partner is participating in some type of professionally directed program or attending daily meetings. You can not take on being responsible for their actions or behaviors. They are solely in charge of their new sober life and the way that they chose to conduct themselves. It's important that you trust their process and provide encouragement.

This may prove very difficult, which is why you need to formulate your own recovery plan. Use the following worksheets to put together your individual plans. I recommend making copies and creating a fresh plan each week.

User's Personal Recovery Plan Worksheet

Week starting on _____

What issues concern you most right now?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What help do you need to deal with each issue?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What help/resources are available to you?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What resources do you want to know more about?

Which elements could you incorporate into your life now?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Going to 12-Step meetings. | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking with others. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking with a counselor. | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning more about addiction. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading a book or online article related to recovery. | |

What three things can you do for yourself this week? Be very specific.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

At the end of the week, how well did you do?

- ☐ Great ☐ Good ☐ OK ☐ Could have been better

Make another copy of this worksheet for the coming week.

Partner's Personal Recovery Plan Worksheet

Week starting on _____

What issues concern you most right now?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What help do you need to deal with each issue?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What help/resources are available to you?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What resources do you want to know more about?

Which elements could you incorporate into your life now?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Going to 12-Step meetings. | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking with a counselor. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking with my family. | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning more about addiction. |

What three things can you do for yourself this week? Be very specific.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

At the end of the week, how well did you do?

- ☐ Great ☐ Good ☐ OK ☐ Could have been better

Make another copy of this worksheet for the coming week.

Part 2

Living Sober

1. Building Partnership

Ed and I got married in 1975 and our first years as newlyweds were glorious. We shared common values and had very few disagreements. Our comfort level with each other was just about “perfect.” And then the glow began to wear off. His work was very stressful and challenging. He would often have long business lunches that included alcohol and many evenings he would have drinks after work and not get home until after 7 pm. I didn’t realize then that he was already an alcoholic.

About six years later we made a huge change in our lives. We left our secure corporate jobs and bought, renovated, and opened a restaurant! We shared this dream and had long talks about it. Finally, we “bit the bullet” and made it happen. This was not a good decision given that Ed now had easy access to alcohol any time he wanted. By the end of our first year as restaurateurs we realized our mistake. We sold the business and Ed went into his first 30-day recovery program. He joined a 12-Step program and attended meetings regularly.

A year later we made another huge shift and moved from New York to California. We started a new life together, complete with great new corporate jobs and a new home. We were very happy. But within two years he relapsed and about four years later he voluntarily entered a second residential program.

We were very fortunate that he became a patient at Sequoia Hospital in Redwood City, California. This program was directed by Dr. Barry Rosen, a pioneer in addiction treatment. At the time, Rosen’s program was highly regarded for its comprehensive and innovative approach to addiction. Not only was the residential program designed to treat the whole person with intensive one-on-one support, group counseling, exercise, and nutrition, it included support for family members. Every week there were family support activities which I attended.

When I went to the first family support session the topic for discussion was “boundaries.” I was quite perplexed. What did boundaries have to do with addiction? The leader explained what they were and how important they were to lasting partnerships and successful recovery. At the time I didn’t understand what she was talking about.

I had difficulty grasping the concept of personal boundaries. I hadn't learned about them as a child. In my family, clearly defined personal boundaries did not exist. I did not understand how people maintained boundaries to give order to their life, and how their boundaries helped keep their relationships on track.

Today I realize that all successful partnerships have clearly defined boundaries as their foundation. When the roles of each partner are defined and respected, values and goals are shared. When problems arise, the partners cooperatively address them and find solutions that support the partnership. Partnerships based on mutual respect and cooperative participation, are able to embrace the addiction recovery process with grace and success.

Substance abuse is a major threat to building a lasting and enriching partnership. When an individual becomes an addicted "user" they are abandoning their personal relationships and turning their life over to the substance. Personal values are abandoned, and satisfying the addiction becomes the overwhelming goal and primary need.

Your personal values define your boundaries. For example, if honesty is something that is important to you, you will most likely have problems with a partner who is comfortable with half-truths and/or lying.

Your personal boundaries will determine:

- How you define your life.
- What you agree to doing and when you say "no."
- Your personal fears, such as rejection.
- How involved you become with others.
- The "emotional walls" you create to protect yourself.
- How you take care of yourself.
- What you do when asked to do something that is not in your best interest.

Partners formulate boundaries/ground rules that help define their life together. These boundaries, once established and honored, make for a safe and comfortable life together.

Areas of everyday life where mutual acceptance is important:

- patterns for waking, eating, sleeping
- responsibilities for household operation and maintenance
- money management
- methods for decision making and problem solving
- parenting issues
- comfortable ways of communicating needs
- mutual respect for each other
- agreement on what's OK and what's not OK

Problems emerge when partners:

- try to dominate decision making
- abuse the other physically, verbally, or emotionally
- discount the thoughts, opinions, and feelings of the other partner
- break promises
- become over-emotional
- are emotionally needy
- are unable to express their needs
- disregard the needs of their partner
- give too much or take too much
- don't speak up when they feel something isn't going right

Creating Productive Partner Discussion

Early recovery involves significant changes for both partners. Your partner is going to go through a huge shift to stay sober. It's going to affect every cell in their body, and every moment they are awake. At times it's going to be difficult for them to think beyond the immediate moment as they struggle to maintain their sobriety.

When they are willing and able to participate in discussions, clear parameters must be agreed upon in order to be productive. Each of you must be "heard" to avoid shifting into arguments. For these discussions to be effective, you need to establish some basic ground rules.

Ground Rules for Productive Discussion:

- Select a "safe" and private place for your talk without distractions or interruptions.
- Turn off your phones.
- Identify the topic to be discussed (and stick to it).
- Exhibit compassion.
- Avoid shame and blame.
- Listen carefully and do not judge each other.
- Avoid making assumptions.
- Ask questions rather than offering solutions.
- Become a witness, not a problem solver.
- Don't give advice unless it is requested.
- Summarize the conversation and any resolutions reached.
- Offer to be available for future discussion.

Helpful Phrases for Productive Discussion:

- Tell me more...
- I sense your frustration...
- What is your goal...
- What will it take for you to get there...
- What are your options...
- Have you considered...
- Would you consider...
- What is your next step...
- What do you need from me...

Summarizing your Discussion

- In what areas have we reached agreement?
- What actions can we implement now?
- Where do we need help?
- What is our next step?

Personal Styles Worksheet

Here are some basic challenges for you and your partner to think about and discuss together.

- 1. How do your everyday patterns for waking, eating, and sleeping suit you?
Is there anything you would like to modify or change?**

- 2. What are your specific responsibilities for household operation and maintenance?**

- 3. Are there any ways that you feel your partner can be more helpful?**

- 4. How do you feel about the way you and your partner are managing your finances?**

- 5. What would you like to do differently?**

- 6. What specific techniques do you and your partner use to solve problems?**

- 7. Are there any changes you would like to propose?**

- 8. How do you reach consensus when you both have differing ideas about how to deal with a given problem?**

Personal Values Worksheet

This worksheet will help clarify values that are important to you. You might find it helpful to start the discussion by each of you completing the survey. Then compare your responses and talk about how you can adjust your boundaries so that your lives and values can fit together with less stress. Often simple adjustments can make a huge difference in creating a happy life together.

Three things that are important to me with regard to our relationship:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

I especially like and respect my partner when:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

I appreciate my partner's help when:

- a. ____ I ask for it
- b. ____ I am having difficulty doing something
- c. ____ They offer to help me
- d. ____ I don't know how to do the task
- e. _____

I find it hard to:

- a. ____ Say "no" when my partner asks me to do something
- b. ____ Ask my partner for help
- c. ____ Tell my partner how to do something
- d. ____ Give my partner negative feedback
- e. _____

It "bugs" me when my partner:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Being Available

One of the ways you can best support your relationship is by making sure your partner knows you are there for them when they need you. I'll never forget the day that Ed told me he thought I was too busy helping others and was never there for him. Wow! That shocked me. I felt I was always there for him and all he had to do was ask for what he wanted from me.

I needed to create a special way to ensure that he knew how important he was to me. So I created a new daily habit and it transformed his relationship with me. Every morning after breakfast, he would go to his office. After he had been there five or ten minutes, I would go to him and gently knock on the door frame and wait for him to invite me in. I did not barge in because I didn't want to interrupt his train of thought. And then I would ask him the following question: "Is there anything you would like from me today?"

The first time I did this he seemed a little surprised. But he realized that I had heard his concern and was making an effort to assure him that his needs were important. It became a daily ritual and a way to remind him of how very important he was to me. After a few weeks, he started asking me what I needed from him! We continued this right up to his last days, and I am forever grateful. I'm grateful that he spoke up and I am grateful that I got the idea to check in with him every day. It brought us even closer together.

I have shared this strategy with others, and several have used it to enrich their relationships. Much to my surprise, each person has gotten back to me to tell me how much those nine words have helped their relationship.

2. Embracing Sobriety Together

I purposefully chose the word “embracing” because living sober after years of using feels very foreign to both the user and the partner. You’ve built a life together where the drug of choice was at the center of the relationship, even if you didn’t realize it was! Now your life together has a whole new set of rules, routines, ways of interacting, expressing thoughts and feelings, and loving each other. It’s important that both of you welcome this new way of living.

The hardest test of our 40+ years of marriage took place in the early months of Ed’s sobriety. Sobriety changes the way you both live, at home and at work. It requires you to surrender your old ways and “embrace” the changes you are making to create a new and improved life together. I encourage you to work together as a team to forge a strong partnership that will sustain your relationship for the rest of your life.

Sobriety changed Ed’s life dramatically. After he became sober, he was faced with finding new coping mechanisms, and he had to figure out what to do with himself. Often he would arrive home from work in an agitated state, stressed by problems at the office. He could no longer use alcohol to relax. He would become restless and irritated. When we went to bed, we both found it difficult to sleep soundly through the night.

Adjusting to new routines, especially in the evenings, weekends, and holidays is a challenge for the recovering user. These changes impact the whole family. Ed would often go to a meeting when he was feeling especially antsy or agitated. It was not unusual for him to attend meetings during the times of day when he used to drink heavily - right after work or after dinner. I felt that he was abandoning me, and I wondered if he was really going to the meeting or stopping off at one of his former haunts. I had little trust in those early days of his sobriety.

One of the most challenging issues I had to work through for myself was coming to grips with the fact that I needed a recovery program as much as my partner. As Ed devoted his time working on his program, I felt more and more isolated. When he would return from a meeting, I’d be waiting for his “news report” and to check that he hadn’t been drinking. When he had very little to say, I’d do a “Barbara Walters” interview. The more questions I asked, the more withdrawn he’d become. Finally, one day in anger, he told me to “Go get a life of your own!”

Our life was stormy. I wondered if we could keep on living together. Wasn't sobriety supposed to fix everything? It scared me to think that we might have to go our separate ways. In time, I came to understand how important it was for me to look at myself and my needs. I needed to acknowledge that it was not our job to fix each other. I had to accept that I was codependent. I had no alternative but to embark on my own recovery program.

I look back on that realization as one of the significant moments of my life. It marked the beginning of an incredible process of increased awareness and self-discovery. As I got more involved in healing my codependence and taking better care of myself, our relationship began to shift. We dealt with problems in new and more productive ways. We shared our thoughts and feelings more openly, and Ed became an important resource for me. That "best friend" I knew before he was so deeply involved in his addiction returned, and we began to restore our trust in each other.

Even now, some thirty years later, the skills I developed back then continue to add new dimensions to my life. They have given me a deep reverence for the gift of living this human life and an ongoing appreciation for all life on Planet Earth.

"This life is my windfall!

That it happens to be a human life is the one chance in a trillion
to be able to realize "That Which Matters."

Frederick Franck in "The Zen of Seeing"

How I Felt About My Partner's Addiction

As my husband's alcoholism developed over the course of our marriage, I didn't give much attention to the impact it was having on my life. While I was aware that he was often quite drunk by the time I got home from work, I did not realize how much his drinking affected the way we lived.

We seldom went out because it would disrupt his drinking. He knew he couldn't drink and then safely drive home. He often napped on the weekend and I was left to amuse myself. I thought he just needed to rest, but in fact, he was sleeping off his lunchtime cocktails.

I did not acknowledge then how alone I was and how little he was available to support me. Nor did I recognize how I had taken on most of the responsibilities for our daily life - keeping the house, planning the meals, paying the bills and so much more. I was often tired, but because of how I was raised, I just assumed it was my job as a "good wife" to keep things together.

Towards the end, before he became sober, he was extremely morose and drank more than ever. Many nights, by the time I got home from work, he was so drunk that we could not have a conversation. He had lost interest in eating, and I often had dinner alone.

I could barely stand being around him in such a drunken state, so I retreated to my bedroom. We stopped sharing the same bed. At night I would lie awake and listen for him. After I heard him stumble into bed, I would check for smoldering cigarettes and pick up his stinky bourbon glass. I wondered if I would see him alive in the morning, and I started wondering how I would survive if he died.

But he didn't die. He chose to live! Ed entered a 30-day recovery program that provided ongoing support for two years. We attended group counseling sessions every week for the first year and twice a month during the second year. These group sessions and the two years of support were an important key to the program's success. Only two out of the eight patient couples participating relapsed. After the two years ended the six couples got together for semi-annual reunions. And to this day - more than thirty years later, sobriety has reigned.

Feelings About My Partner's Addiction Worksheet

This worksheet offers you an opportunity to review your life while your partner was using. It can help you get in touch with your feelings when your partner was actively using. As you read each question, write down the first thing that pops into your mind. Don't worry about making sentences, just jot down your thoughts. Sometimes you won't have a response.

At what time of day did your partner start using?	
By what time of day did your partner become "drunk/high"? How did this impact you?	
Did your partner ever get so high they couldn't function?	
In what specific ways did they become non-functional?	
How did you feel when they got this way?	
What did you do?	
What did it prevent you from doing?	
How did you take care of your partner?	
How did you protect your partner?	
What support did you get from your partner?	
What support did you need?	
What happened as a result of not getting this support?	
How did your partner's using impact your sex life?	
What scared you about your partner when they were using?	
What scared you when your partner stopped using?	
Now take a few minutes to summarize how your partner's using impacted your life.	

Next Step:

Discuss your responses with your partner without shame or blame. This is a step towards positive open communication and will help you build your new sober relationship. If you don't feel comfortable sharing with your partner at this time, you might want to explore your responses with your counselor.

Routines and Rituals

Before sobriety much of our life together was based on routines. We'd get up in the morning and have coffee and cigarettes, get dressed, eat breakfast, and then go off to work. We'd talk very little - we were both slow starters. It took time to work off the alcohol consumed the night before.

When I'd get home at night Ed had already started his cocktails. He would offer to fix one for me. I always accepted because it was hard to relate to him if I stayed sober. We'd have great discussions - the liquor loosened us up. In this drug-induced state, conversation came easily as we talked grand thoughts about the wrongs of the world and how we could save it. Then we'd fix dinner and continue our liquored conversations.

Shortly after dinner, I would go to bed. The alcohol would make me very sleepy. But he would continue drinking by himself for several hours. Alcohol was at the center of our lives. We built our interactions with each other around cocktails and wine.

Things changed when my husband came home after his stay in the hospital. We began to realize how much our interaction with each other was accompanied by a drink in our hand. We found that without the alcohol we were like strangers. We didn't know what to say or do during that hour before dinner. Our old routines no longer served us. There was a huge void. We needed to redesign family life.

Examining Daily Routines Worksheet

This worksheet helps you explore your daily use of addictive substances.

This is an opportunity for you and your partner to talk openly and frankly about how alcohol and drugs influence your life and think about ways to develop new routines and interests.

Time of Day	Old Routine	New Routine
Wake-up		
Before breakfast		
During the day		
Before dinner		
Mealtime		
After dinner		
Before bed		
Saturday		
Sunday		
Other		

In Mourning

When I gave up smoking cigarettes years ago, I felt as if I had lost my best friend. When my husband gave up alcohol, he felt like he had lost the love of his life. We both felt like we were going through a death experience - just as if we had lost a close friend or family member. The days that ensued were days of mourning.

Cigarettes were an integral part of my life. I used them from the moment I got up in the morning until I went to bed. They made me feel good. In many ways, my life was defined by my smoking. I actually planned my activities around my cigarettes. For example, when I finished a task or a project, I'd reward myself with a cigarette. Before I started something, I'd have a cigarette while planning my next move. So when I gave up smoking, I was forced to look at my life and redefine it.

Giving up an old habit is only the first step in a complex mourning process. After abstaining for a while, we might deny our addiction and start using again, believing that now we can control our habit. This type of relapse happened to me the first time I stopped smoking.

After several months of not smoking I thought that I could manage to smoke just one tiny cigar a day. Even though I had given up cigarettes, I still wanted nicotine and craved the act of smoking. I really wasn't ready to stop. Eventually, with the help of a prescribed drug, I was successful.

Once we stop using, we can easily become angry with the rest of the world, especially those using our drug of choice. We may erupt over anything irritating. We make big issues out of small events. We blame others and fail to see that the problem lies within ourselves. We haven't yet begun the process of redefining our life so that we can live comfortably without our drug. If our anger goes unchecked, it becomes rage. And rage, if allowed to run rampant, can become as addictive and harmful as any drug or bad habit.

What follows after the anger surfaces is a period of deep despair. Depression sets in. We have lost our will to 'be' or 'do'. It is a time of great helplessness. Giving up cigarettes made me feel like I had completely lost my joy and love of life. All I wanted to do was hide in bed - where I could be by myself and distance myself from the rest of the world.

Ironically, at this point in the mourning process, we can embark on the true recovery journey - finding our will to live and developing a new meaning for our life.

The final stage of mourning is acceptance and willingness to move on. At this point, you can give up control and turn your life over to your higher power.

The following “In Mourning” worksheet can help you identify some of the grief issues that you and your partner may face during your recovery.

In Mourning Worksheet

It's important to give voice to what the drug of choice meant to each of you and how its absence impacts your life together. These questions for discussion can help you think through your personal thoughts and feelings about early sobriety.

- 1. What do you miss most about the drug's presence in your life?**
- 2. What do you miss least about the drug's presence in your life?**
- 3. How do you feel now that the drug is no longer being used?**
- 4. How did the use of the drug help your relationship?**
- 5. How did the use of the drug hurt your relationship?**
- 6. How/When/Why/Where did you "use" together?**
- 7. What was good about that?**
- 8. How did you feel when you were using together?**
- 9. What do you miss most now that you can't use together?**
- 10. What is your greatest fear about (your partner) not using anymore?**
- 11. What is your dream for your drug-free partnership?**
- 12. What are your next steps?**

The Essential Decision

Sobriety is hard work. For a user to have a successful recovery they must admit that they can not maintain sobriety without help from others. And the people in their lives must support that concept and participate with them in sober living.

Ed and I decided that going forward, as part of his sobriety strategy, we would have an alcohol-free life together. We realized that it would be very difficult for us to stay on the same page if I continued to drink or have an occasional cocktail, or use wine in cooking, or keep liquor in the cupboard to serve to guests.

We removed all alcohol from the house including cooking wines, and medicines that had any alcohol content (such as cough medicine).

We agreed that when we invited guests to our home, we would let them know in advance that we did not have alcohol in our home and we would specifically ask them not to bring alcohol as a gift.

We participated in social gatherings with family and friends where alcohol was served, but we agreed that if we encountered a situation where people were consuming alcohol and either one of us was uncomfortable, we would leave - no questions asked.

These decisions supported Ed's sobriety and enhanced our life together. It took time for us to adjust and create new routines and rituals that did not include alcohol. But we found that being sober together brought us closer to each other. Our communications skills increased over time and we developed a true and trusting partnership.

It was not always "wonderful." Our journey was over a bumpy road, but we wanted to make it work, so we worked hard to create success. It was our greatest achievement together.

Current Recovery Issues Worksheet

This worksheet has been designed to help you talk about specific recovery issues that may concern you today.

What issues concern you most right now? (family, work, finances, health etc.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What help do you need in order to deal with each issue?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What help/resources are available to you?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Which forms of support could you incorporate into your life now to help you?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attending meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking with friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking with a counselor | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning more about recovery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking with other users | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning more about other resources that might be available |

What three things will you do to help address these issues this week?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Living Together Today Worksheet

It's very helpful during early recovery for both partners to keep their focus on living one day at a time and not try to plan their entire future. Focusing on "today" and setting some simple goals will help you feel good about living your new sober life.

**Discuss what you would like to accomplish in the next 24 hours.
Keep goals simple and measurable.**

They might include:

- Eat breakfast (if you usually skip it).
- Exercise together for 15 minutes.
- Pay bills.
- Visit a relative you haven't seen in a while.
- Read a book.
- Take a walk together.
- Go grocery shopping.
- Get to bed before 10 pm.
- And most importantly - REMAIN SOBER!

Today we will do the following things together:

One Day at a Time Worksheet

My Plan for: _____

On this day I will:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What could keep you from achieving your goal?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My partner can help me by:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What other support could help you achieve these goals?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Planning can be addictive and compulsive, or it can be educational and useful. Often what we set out to do is not always what we are able to accomplish.

Before you go to bed tonight ask yourself “How well did today go?” Be specific.

What went well?

1. _____
2. _____

What could have gone better?

1. _____
2. _____

Would you do anything differently next time?

1. _____
2. _____

3. Relapse Planning

It was fifteen years into our marriage when my husband first acknowledged that he was an alcoholic. When he stopped drinking, I felt tremendous relief. I was sure that he was the kind of person who lived up to his commitments and that he could simply use his willpower to never drink again.

I had heard about relapse, but I didn't think that it would happen to him. Looking back I can see that this was my own form of denial and lack of understanding of the disease. He relapsed about six months after treatment, and within a week he was drinking as much as he had been drinking before he had gone into the hospital.

I felt betrayed. I saw him as weak-willed. I didn't understand the disease and I didn't have anyone to talk to. I didn't understand what was happening or how to deal with it. He and I had never talked about relapse. Just like we had never really talked about the other difficult issues that impacted our life together.

Now I know that relapse is an ever present threat in the addict's life. Even people with twenty years of sobriety can relapse. In fact, relapse is a normal part of the recovery process. Many users don't "get" it the first time!

I encourage you to understand relapse, read about it, learn about it and talk about it together. Most importantly, plan in advance how you will both deal with it. This way it won't get swept under the rug or ignored. When it comes up, you and your partner can put your plan into action.

You may be the first person to recognize the early signals of relapse - even before your partner does. How will you respond to these observations? What will you say or do? How will you take care of yourself and your family if and when your partner relapses?

Relapse Planning Worksheet

Use this worksheet to discuss and develop a relapse plan.

What are the symptoms that signal your partner might be headed for a relapse?

What events are most likely to trigger relapse for your partner?

What will you say to your partner if you observe relapse symptoms or suspect that relapse has occurred?

**How will you support yourself if your partner relapses? Whom will you call?
How will you deal with your feelings?**

What support would your partner like from you if they relapse? What do they want you to do and NOT do?

Post Acute Withdrawal Symptoms (PAWS)

Terrence Gorski, co-author of the book “Staying Sober” has defined this unique syndrome of addiction recovery called “Post Acute Withdrawal Symptoms.” These are behaviors that seem to occur during monthly or quarterly cycles after abstinence from the drug of choice has started.

We first learned about PAWS at the family support group session. One of the recovering alcoholics talked about being “out of sorts.” She described how she wasn’t sleeping very well and how she felt very uncoordinated. She was often spilling water or dropping things. The leader told us about PAWS.

PAWS occurs because the body has been accustomed to functioning with the presence and help of the drug. It doesn’t like the absence of the drug and reacts strongly to remind the user it really wants more drugs! When PAWS emerges, it’s very important for the recovering user to amp up the recovery practices they have in place so that they do not relapse.

Several weeks after we learned about these behaviors, the symptoms appeared - full blown - in my husband. He thought he was “losing it.” He couldn’t remember what he had just done five minutes before. He was becoming extremely short tempered. Sure enough, when we checked the calendar, we discovered that it was just three months before, when he had entered the hospital’s recovery program.

We both felt better knowing that this was common, and by recognizing it, he was able to manage it as part of his recovery process. He paid attention to his sugar consumption and made sure he got daily exercise after work. His symptoms subsided over time. We knew they were gone when he was able to get a full night’s sleep. But for some folks in recovery PAWS is a substantial issue and requires professional attention.

Ways to deal with PAWS:

- Pay attention to your symptoms. Don't just blow them off!
- Consult with your recovery advisors about the symptoms you are having.
- Learn effective ways to deal with sleep problems.
- Implement a daily exercise program.
- Eat healthy food.
- Avoid eating high-fat and sugary foods.
- Attend support meetings regularly.
- Talk with your sponsor. Chances are they have experienced PAWS!

Learn ways to manage your impulses. Remember most impulses pass in about 20 minutes. If you find it difficult to deal with PAWS, get help. Talk with your sponsor or consult with your doctor. Do not ignore them.

Pay attention!

This is a very dangerous time because these uncomfortable symptoms are tempting the user to RELAPSE!

The PAWS worksheet provided on the next page details the symptoms and can help you track them over time.

PAWS Worksheet

Make several copies of this worksheet to track your stress over time. Begin your first worksheet at the beginning of the second month of your recovery and do it every week for four weeks in a row.

Date you entered your recovery program: _____

Date you are completing this worksheet: _____

	Not at all	Once or Twice	A few times this week	Every Day
“Fuzzy” thinking (brain fog)				
Overreacting				
Emotional outbursts				
Difficulty concentrating				
Feeling out of control				
Depression				
Anxiety				
Cravings				
Being tired all the time				
Obsessive or compulsive behavior				
Memory loss				
Trouble sleeping				
Poor body coordination				
Difficulty dealing with stress				
Guilty feelings				

Describe any trends you are concerned about:

What can you do to help yourself?

What kind of support would you like from your partner?

Where can you get additional support?

What will you do between now and next week to get better?

4. Codependence

I want to introduce you to the concept of “codependency.” You will hear this word mentioned frequently. What is it? One way of describing it is as a “relationship addiction.” The codependent is so focused on the other person that they lose touch with their own needs and feelings. Their interaction with the other person defines their life.

Codependents tend to minimize their feelings, judge themselves harshly, and have trouble asking for what they need. They do not feel they are worthy of love, have a high need to control others, and often avoid intimacy.

I fit the description of codependent “*to a T*.” I developed these behaviors as a child, but the first time I learned about codependence was in a family support group at Ed’s recovery center. I was startled to learn that I had all of the characteristics.

Very quickly I realized that this was an important area for me to explore as part of “our” recovery process. Accepting this fact enabled me to embark on my own extraordinary growth and recovery journey at the same time that we recovered as a couple, and as we grew, so did our relationship.

I encourage you to explore your own codependency issues. One of the best places to begin is to get in touch with your needs right from the start of this journey and develop a strategy for your own recovery.

How do you begin? I started by attending the family sessions at the hospital. I also saw a therapist regularly. Throughout my life, I have had periods when I resumed counseling. I read a lot of self-improvement books, even now, years later.

Dealing with codependency is a project that you really can’t do alone. One way to start is to attend a 12-Step meeting and ask others which resources they have used to deal with their codependency. Al-Anon and CoDA (Co-Dependents Anonymous) are 12-Step organizations you may find helpful.

Echoes of the Past

It's not uncommon for partners in addictive relationships to have lived in dysfunctional families that modeled unhealthy behaviors. Looking back on your formative years will help both of you support each other in healthy and productive ways as you create a new sober life together.

I always considered my childhood normal. I lived with the fact that I got blamed and punished for many things that I didn't do. That was the way it was in my family. I was always trying to do the right thing that would keep me out of trouble, and I became an inveterate "people pleaser."

When I came home for Thanksgiving during my freshman year at college, my family laughed about how they blamed me for things that happened around the house when I was away - even though I couldn't have possibly done them. For me that was no laughing matter. I realized that I had been the family scapegoat. It made me angry.

I now know that these aspects of my childhood were not normal. As the family scapegoat, I had no control over what I would get blamed for. To avoid their blame, and the punishment that often went with it, I did everything in my power to be "good" so I would not be punished. But even with all that effort I was most often identified as the culprit when something went wrong. Then came the punishment. It was not uncommon for my mother to spank me and send me to my room. The only coping strategy I had was to try to figure out in advance what my mother wanted from me so she would see what a good well-behaved child I was! Unfortunately, she was so accustomed to viewing me as "the bad one" that she was seldom able to appreciate me in a loving fashion. Her rejections of my behavior caused me to become very conflicted. I was never really sure that I was good enough for her or for anybody.

I carried this self-image of "not being good enough" into adulthood and worked very hard to become a super-performer. People saw me as being a perfectionist. I saw myself as just trying to do a good job so that people would like me.

I wasn't able to like myself and enjoy being me. I was too tied up in trying to be the person I thought others wanted me to be. This created a number of relationship problems as I had very little trust in both myself and in others.

Working with a therapist, I have learned ways to deal with these inner conflicts. I no longer associate performance expectations with blame and punishment. I am open to seeing conflict as a normal part of the human experience. It can be discussed and resolved. These new skills helped me to communicate more openly with Ed as we traveled our individual roads to recovery. Disagreement is a normal part of the human experience and something to be discussed openly and honestly.

Codependency is a keystone topic for you to explore. If you are attending 12-Step meetings regularly you will be able to learn a great deal about codependency. A sponsor will be able to discuss your issues and help you find ways to take charge of your life instead of trying to focus so much on others.

Use the “Echoes of the Past” worksheet to explore childhood experiences that might be influencing the way you currently deal with your problems. I encourage you to discuss your responses with a counselor, therapist, or spiritual advisor. I don’t think I would have made much progress without their help and guidance.

Your partner may find the worksheet helpful. The roots of their illness are linked to their past experiences.

Echoes of the Past Worksheet

Page 1

The list below contains descriptions of ways adults interact negatively with children.
Mark the appropriate column to describe your memory of the frequency of the behavior.
Use "M" for Mom, "D" for Dad, "B" for both parents, or "O" for Other adult.

Parental Behavior	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
Was drunk/high most of the time.				
Spanked me.				
Hit me.				
Beat me.				
Yelled at me.				
Called me names.				
Told me that I was no good.				
Confined me in a room or closet.				
Told me that I was stupid.				
Told me I would never amount to anything.				
Told me I was ugly.				
Told me I was bad.				
Was very strict with me.				
Touched my body in sexual ways.				
Forgot to pick me up from school.				
Drove drunk or high with me in the car.				
Embarrassed me in front of others.				
Made me keep secrets.				
Slept in the bed with me.				
Abandoned me.				
Relied on me for emotional support.				

Echoes of the Past Worksheet

Page 2

Other Experiences	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
I had to sleep in the car when my parents were partying or drinking.				
I felt ashamed of my parents.				
I avoided bringing friends to my house.				
My parents lived apart from each other.				
I had to wear dirty clothing.				
My clothes did not fit.				
I was hungry a lot of the time.				
I had to fix my own meals.				
I shared my bed with others.				
I was often left on my own.				
Adults relied on me for emotional support.				
A parent said they wished I'd never been born.				
A parent threatened to send me away.				

If you checked often or sometimes, you may have grown up with hidden pain. As a result you may have developed some dysfunctional ways of coping with pain that are still with you today.

Right now, which three topics are you most interested in exploring?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I encourage you to discuss these experiences with a trained counselor or therapist. If you are not currently working with a counselor check with some of your new 12-Step friends. They may be able to refer you to one.

Healthy Boundaries

The concept of boundaries was very new to me when I started my recovery journey. I learned about them when I went to the first family session at the hospital shortly after Ed entered his 30-day program. The speaker talked about boundaries and I remember being quite baffled by the term. I had to ask her to explain it to me, and even then I didn't understand how boundaries related to human behavior. It took time for me to understand and integrate them into my life.

A personal boundary is like a personal limit. It defines what you will and will not accept in your life, and what you will and will not do to get what you want or need. An emotionally healthy person creates healthy boundaries for their life.

If one's boundaries are very rigid they live with many personal limits - rules about what they will and will not do. Individuals raised with very harsh rules at home often have rigid boundaries as an adult. These can be so rigid that they find it difficult to live and get along with others. At the other extreme, there are people without any boundaries. They have no sense of "self" or "right and wrong" and will do whatever others tell them to do. Often they have had to learn as children how to survive on their own without adult supervision and support.

One important goal of recovery is to formulate healthy and reasonable boundaries for your life. These boundaries will guide you when you have to make decisions about how you are going to live. Here are several examples:

Situation One:

Your Partner gets mad at you and berates you with foul language because you broke their bicycle.

No Boundaries:

You scream and yell back at them.

Healthy Boundary:

You inform them that the language is not OK and leave the room.

Rigid Boundary:

You say nothing but get very angry and hold your rage inside.

Situation Two:

Your Partner asks you to tell a lie.

No Boundaries:

You go along with their request and tell the lie even though you know that they are wrong.

Healthy Boundary:

In a calm manner you say you are unable to lie because you expect honesty from yourself and from others.

Rigid Boundary:

You refuse to lie and turn it into a morality lesson by punishing your partner in some fashion.

Situation Three

While waiting in line the person next to you engages you in conversation.

No Boundaries:

You tell them your life story in great detail.

Healthy Boundary:

You engage in a short conversation about something easy and uncontroversial.

Rigid Boundary:

When they try to engage you, you avoid talking and read your book or look away.

Codependent Behaviors Worksheet

Part 1

The list below describes behaviors that codependents rely on to get along in this world. For each statement, rate yourself by entering your score.

0 - if it is something you do not do very often

1 - if it is something you do once in a while

2 - if you do it regularly (once or twice a week)

3 - if this is fairly typical of your everyday behavior

1. I avoid conflict. _____
2. I have difficulty adjusting to changes in my daily routines. _____
3. I find it hard to express how I am feeling about my life and relationships. _____
4. I feel inadequate when I compare myself to my family and friends. _____
5. I feel bad when I make a mistake - even a little one! _____
6. I am uncomfortable when people compliment me. _____
7. I find it difficult to say "no" when I'm asked to do something I don't want to do. _____
8. I find it hard to ask others to help me. _____
9. I only feel "worthy" when I get approval from others. _____
10. I give more than I get! _____
11. I go along with others to avoid conflict or to please them. _____
12. I feel most comfortable when I am in charge and can be in control. _____
13. I avoid being alone. _____
14. I feel responsible for the behaviors of others. _____
15. I do more than my share in a group situation. _____
16. I feel minimized when others do not appreciate me. _____
17. I am afraid my friends don't really like me and will abandon our friendship. _____
18. I need approval from my family and friends. _____
19. I feel guilty being assertive when something is not going well. _____
20. I put other people's needs before my own. _____
21. I have problems with intimacy. _____
22. I find it difficult to make final decisions. _____
23. I tell others too much about myself. _____
24. I find myself "falling in love" before I really get to know the person well. _____
25. I become too intimate too soon. _____
26. I do not stand up for myself. _____
27. I abuse substances (food, alcohol, drugs). _____

Add up your score.

Total _____

Explore your responses using "Part 2" on the next page.

Codependent Behaviors Worksheet

Part 2

Review your responses.

1. Do you see any patterns or trends?
2. What have you learned about yourself by doing this exercise?
3. Do any of your ratings surprise you?
4. People who set healthy boundaries don't let others influence the way they live their lives. They are more likely to have low scores. How have your behaviors been influenced by the way others have treated you in the past?
5. If you are having boundary issues, you will most likely have a higher score because you are trying to be kind and helpful to others and tend to neglect yourself.
6. How many items did you rate "3".
7. Look back at the items you rated "3". Pick two issues you would like to work on and re-write the statement to reflect a positive behavior. This is not an easy exercise. Talk it over with a good friend or counselor or bring it up at a 12-Step meeting.

Examples:

Codependent Behavior A:

I find it hard to ask others to help me.

Healthy revised version:

When I need help, I ask for it so that I can achieve a good outcome and move on.

Codependent Behavior B:

I feel guilty being assertive when something is not going well.

Healthy revised version:

I will speak up about what is not working so that my partner and I can find an appropriate solution.

Behaviors I will work on:

My Codependent Behavior _____

My healthy revised version _____

My Codependent Behavior _____

My healthy revised version _____

Self-Care Worksheet for Codependents

It's easy for codependents to neglect themselves and their needs. Listed below are descriptions of various behaviors we use from time to time. However, codependents have a tendency to defer to others' needs and neglect taking care of themselves.

Behaviors:

- I find myself doing things for others (instead of myself) much of the time.
- When something goes wrong, I try to help make it "right."
- To avoid trouble, I keep my thoughts and feelings to myself.
- When I get involved in something, I let it consume me.
- When faced with a serious problem, I put off dealing with it.
- I feel happiest when I am helping other people.
- I find it difficult to speak out about what's on my mind.
- I find it difficult to say "no" to others.
- I find that often I don't trust myself or others.
- When I let my true feelings show, I worry that people will reject me.
- I like to be organized so I can get things done efficiently.
- I usually put other people's needs before my own.

Which behaviors would you like to focus on changing?

You may find it helpful to discuss these with a counselor or friend to find new ways of interacting with the people in your daily life. This might include:

- Learning ways of speaking up and expressing your true thoughts and feelings.
- Developing trust in your own instincts and values.
- Acknowledging your needs and putting them before the needs of others.

5. Nurturing the Body: Using Food

Food is a centerpiece of life. Every human being needs daily nourishment to stay alive. Our food choices impact our health in many different ways.

You are undoubtedly aware of the term “balanced diet.” Our body is an incredible machine that needs specific nutrients from food in order to keep it healthy and functioning. It needs calories in the form of carbohydrates and fats to fuel it, and vitamins and minerals to fine-tune and support the organs so that they work together properly.

“Balance” is key to keeping the body functioning like a finely tuned machine. Too much or not enough of any one nutrient can impact the way that our body works to keep us disease free. If we consume more calories than we need, they are stored in the form of fat. Excess fat can build up and our body has to work harder. The extra weight stresses the organs so that they work less efficiently. Obesity is the result and also the cause of much human illness and disease. Your goal is to consume the right kinds and amounts of food to keep your body machine in top shape.

Food offers us comfort, and it can easily become the new “drug of choice” when one stops using toxic substances. Food makes us feel good. We use it to “stuff” our feelings. We use it to help us forget. We use it to make the pain go away. It’s not uncommon for recovering users to substitute food for their drug of choice. It’s a form of oral stimulation that makes them feel good - almost as satisfying as using.

There is an abundance of information about nutrition and health on the internet. I encourage you to learn more, because the food you eat is the most important factor influencing your health. If you feed your body correctly, it will respond by rewarding you with top performance!

Healthy eating is a key component to successful recovery! In addition to being essential to maintaining health, food is a substance that provides pleasure - just like alcohol and drugs! If it is consumed addictively, it creates many problems and health issues such as being overweight, diabetes, heart disease, and other diseases that seriously impact the function of your body organs.

Ed and I were “foodies”. We absolutely loved food. We loved to grow it, buy it, prepare it, and eat it. Food played an important role in both of our recoveries. We recognized that it had the potential of being substituted for alcohol. With a home economics background, I was well versed in the importance of food in maintaining health, and we were well educated about the dangers of overeating.

While he was drinking, Ed was consuming a great of sugar from alcohol. Once he became sober, his body craved those sweet calories! There were times when he would come home with a half pound-chocolate bar. His need for sugar was very hard for him to manage. In his first years of sobriety, he put on over 20 pounds. Fortunately, he observed the impact that extra weight had on his health and over time he eliminated sugar completely from his diet and lost all those added pounds.

We made food shopping a weekend event. Saturday mornings we went to the local farmer’s market to shop for our fruits and vegetables. The vendors offered tasting samples and it was fun to compare plums and grapes from the different farms. We loved tasting seasonal fruit and learned that soil makes a big difference in the way a vegetable or fruit tastes.

Ed did most of the cooking during the week because he got home from work several hours before I did. I cooked on the weekends and prepared foods that would produce leftovers to reheat on the days that he had late meetings.

Weekdays we each fixed our own breakfast and lunches as our schedules did not always sync. For breakfast Ed usually had cereal with milk, and coffee. I would eat oatmeal with nuts and fruit. His lunch consisted of a banana, an apple, and a container of low-fat yogurt. I usually took a sandwich to work or ate in the company cafeteria.

When we retired we made an unusual arrangement regarding meals. We agreed to take turns cooking dinners for a week at a time. The cook did it all - shopped, prepared food and cleaned up. We each continued to take care of our own breakfast and lunch. The gift of our arrangement was that the week you didn’t cook you became a guest in your own home! It was great to be a dinner “guest” for seven days in a row. When my turn came, I had fun planning and cooking because I knew the next week he would be the chef! Cooking stopped being a chore and instead became a fun challenge.

This arrangement suited us well. We had some ground rules; we could go to a restaurant or use take-out when we had a scheduling conflict. We could even serve breakfast for dinner if we ran out of time. But we agreed that our meals would be nutritionally complete with all food groups represented. We discovered that if we ate fresh food prepared without lots of added calories we had fewer cravings. We opted to avoid fried foods, rich sauces and heavy doses of animal fats found in dairy products. Instead, we shifted to healthy foods and “eating the rainbow.”

How I Use Food Worksheet

Each of us have our own associations with food. For instance, as a child milk made me nauseous unless it was flavored. My mother insisted I drink it. She would only flavor it with chocolate on special occasions. Getting that glass of milk down was an on-going challenge. As an adult I never drink milk. Instead I consume dairy products such as cheese and creamed soups.

1. List the foods you eat when you are feeling especially good about yourself.
2. Make a list of foods you remember from your childhood. Put a check mark next to those you associate with good times.
3. Which foods do you eat when you are feeling tense or anxious?
4. What foods do you dislike?
Why? (taste, texture, memories)
5. What are your favorite snack foods? How often do you eat them?
6. What are good ways you use food?
7. What are unhealthy ways you use food?
8. How would you feel about your children using food the same way that you do?
9. Does food interfere with your life in any way? If yes, describe?
10. What do your answers say about you and food?

If you discovered that you may be using food as a substitute for self-esteem, you may want to read the book *"When Food is Love"* by Geneen Roth. If you are overweight and feel you are addicted to food, you may want to check out Overeaters Anonymous, a 12-Step program for food addicts.

Food for Health

Your specific food needs vary depending on your age, body type, physical activity, and current health.

It's best if you eat a variety of foods at every meal. There is evidence that folks who eat lots of fruits and vegetables (four or more cups a day) tend to have strong immune systems and healthy bodies.

Those who eat lots of foods made from flour, sugar and fats, do not seem to be as healthy as those who eat more natural foods. As we age, we are more likely to suffer from chronic health problems such as arthritis, diabetes, heart and lung disease, inflammation, and digestive problems. When we improve our diet, we can experience dramatic improvement in our health status.

Food also plays an important role in recovery from disease and physical trauma such as surgery and addiction. There is significant evidence that when one increases the consumption of natural foods including fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts and seeds they heal faster and better!

Foods to Eat Daily

Fruits

Vegetables

Grains

Nuts and seeds

Protein from animals & seafood

Dairy

Fat

Exploring Fruits and Vegetables Worksheet Page 1

Including fruits and vegetables in every meal will improve your health.

1. Circle the vegetables that you normally eat.

Artichoke	Asparagus	Arugula	Avocado	Beet	Bok Choy
Broccoli	Broccolini	Brussels Sprouts	Chinese Cabbage	Green Cabbage	Red Cabbage
Carrots	Cauliflower	Celeriac	Celery	Chard	Chicory
Corn	Cress	Cucumber	Daikon	Eggplant	Garlic
Green Beans	Collard Greens	Mustard Greens	Jicama	Kale	Kohlrabi
Leeks	Lima Beans	Mushrooms	Okra	Onions	Green Onions
Parsnips	Peas	Sugar Snap Peas	Snow Peas	Hot Peppers	Sweet Peppers
Potatoes	Pumpkin	Radicchio	Radish	Rutabaga	Shallots
Spinach	Summer Squash	Butternut Squash	Spaghetti Squash	Sweet Potato	Tomatillo
Tomato	Turnip	Water Chestnut	Yam	Yellow Squash	Zucchini

2. Which vegetables have you never eaten.

3. Select one or two new vegetables to try this week.

4. Look them up on the internet to learn more about how to use them. Several of the worksheets in this section offer ideas for meals that can be prepared at home with very little experience and effort.

Exploring Fruits and Vegetables Worksheet

Page 2

5. Exploring Fruits: Circle the fruits that you usually eat.

Apple	Apricot	Asian Pear	Banana	Blackberry	Blueberry
Cantaloupe	Carambola (star fruit)	Casaba	Cherries	Cherimoya (Custard Apple)	Coconut
Cranberry	Figs	Grapefruit	Grapes	Guava	Honeydew
Kiwi	Kumquat	Lemon	Lime	Loquat	Lychee
Mandarin Orange	Mango	Mulberry	Nectarine	Orange	Papaya
Passion Fruit	Peach	Pear	Persimmon	Pineapple	Plantain
Plum	Pomegranate	Prune	Pummelo	Quince	Raisin
Raspberries	Rhubarb	Strawberries	Tangelo	Tangerine	Ugli Fruit
Watermelon					

6. Which fruits have you never eaten?

7. Select one or two new fruits to try this week.

8. Every week purchase several fruits or veggies to explore as part of your mealtime adventure. My guess is that you will find some really tasty new foods you will want to include in family meals and everyone will have fun trying out new things.

Fruits and vegetables can be purchased in a variety of formats.

- Fresh
- Canned
- Dried
- Frozen
- Jarred
- Prepared take-out such as salads and marinated vegetables

Daily Meal Planning Made Easy

I enjoy cooking but I don't want to spend a lot of time on meal preparation. I am a firm believer in the "KISS" (Keep It Simple) approach to meals at home. Over the years food preparation has become easier and easier. I keep frozen and canned fruits and veggies in my pantry and freezer for convenience. I always have a supply of easy to cook foods. This way I can make a simple and healthy meal in less than 30 minutes.

When I cook I often make enough for 2-3 meals. I cook several times each week and reheat the rest of the time. For instance, here's a list of the food I will make for one week:

I'm not sure which day I'll serve the specific foods but I plan ahead what I expect to prepare and have the ingredients on-hand.

Breakfast:

- Smoothies
- Oatmeal muesli with nuts
- Egg sandwich

Lunch:

- Bean salad
- Mixed salad
- Tuna sandwich
- Vegetable soup
- Apples, tangerines

Dinner:

- Veggie frittata
- Grilled veggies with hummus
- Rice bowl
- Mushroom pizza
- Chef's salad

<h2>What are your favorite foods?</h2>
--

Breakfast	Lunch
Dinner	Snacks

My Weekly Shopping List

Below are the foods I like to have in my kitchen. Before I go shopping I check this pantry list and include any items that need replenishing, in addition to the fresh food I need for my planned meals. You can use this page as a starter for your own weekly shopping list.

Fresh Veggies:

Onions, green onions, carrots, zucchini, celery, cucumbers, mixed greens for salad, mushrooms, tomatoes, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, butternut squash

Fresh Fruits:

Apples, oranges, tangerines, grapefruit, berries, watermelon, cantaloupe

Canned Food:

White beans, kidney beans, garbanzos, pinto beans, corn, green beans, mushrooms

Dairy:

Kefir, feta cheese, parmesan cheese, cheddar cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese

Frozen:

Broccoli, chopped spinach, corn, shrimp, scallops, meatballs, fish sticks, rice, noodles

Grains:

Oatmeal, rice, quinoa, barley, pasta, tortillas, hummus

Protein:

Fish, chicken, ground turkey, eggs

Fats:

Butter, olive oil

Dressings:

Goddess, Feta, Ranch, Blue Cheese, Vinaigrette, and Thousand Island
These dressings also make great sauces for food!

Other foods:

Walnuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, dried cranberries, raisins, banana chips, spices, mustard, honey

Easy Fixes for Vegetables

Vegetables are a very important component of a healthy recovery plan. They contain multiple vitamins and minerals that are essential for helping your body restore itself. You'll find that if you increase your vegetable and fruit intake, over time you will reduce your sugar cravings. And the bonus is that veggies have a far lower calorie content than sugar.

My favorite methods for cooking veggies are roasting, stir-frying, grilling, and boiling. I usually cook enough for several meals. I use the cold leftover veggies for reheats and in salads and even sandwiches. This saves time and effort.

I like to put cooked veggies in egg dishes such as omelettes and frittatas. And I often make soups using a combination of veggies. One of my favorite soups is chowder. I make it by combining potatoes, onions, and celery with a feature vegetable such as corn. You can substitute asparagus, mixed vegetables, butternut squash or broccoli for the corn. You can add meats and fish for more exotic chowders like shrimp chowder or meatball soup.

Soup

A very simple basic soup starts with a can of condensed soup. Add additional broth and veggies (raw, cooked, leftover, canned) and a protein such as chicken, sausage or other cooked meat. Cook for 15 minutes to get the flavors to meld.

Another quick soup can be created from foods found in the freezer. To hot broth I add frozen meatballs, ravioli or other stuffed pasta, shrimp, and broccoli or other frozen veggies. Put them together and cook for 10 minutes and dinner is on the table. The possibilities are limited only by the foods you keep on hand and your imagination!

Rice Bowls

A rice bowl is made from cooked rice and two or three cooked veggies and a liquid or a sauce. Half-fill the bowl with cooked rice, add the veggies and drizzle a pre-made sauce on top. Some of my favorites are specialty salad dressings like ranch, blue cheese, cilantro or general cooking sauces such as barbecue and Asian cooking sauces.

Sheet Pan Meals

A very efficient way to cook up a bunch of veggies is roasting them on a sheet pan. There are numerous references to sheet pan meals on the internet. I do this on the weekend and then use the leftovers for rice bowls, soups, salads, and even pita-style sandwiches!

Sandwiches

Sandwiches are quick, easy, and yummy. Consider adding left-over cooked veggies to your favorite sandwich, or rolling up a lettuce leaf or tortilla filled with leftover veggies and topping it with grated cheese and a tablespoon of salad dressing.

Salads

Plan to have salad at least once a day. I actually eat salad at both lunch and dinner. It is such an easy way to get my veggies.

Start with a salad base of:

- Mixed greens
- Sliced celery
- Chopped onion

Add one or two of the following:

- Chopped or grated carrot
- Chopped peppers, tomatoes, cucumber, zucchini or yellow squash
- Grated cabbage
- Leftover cooked veggies from the refrigerator
- Canned veggies such as white beans, corn or green beans

Lightly dress the salad with olive oil so that any leftover salad can be stored in the refrigerator for a day or two. The oil prevents the leaves from wilting.

Top the salad with grated or crumbled cheese or diced meat or chicken and your favorite salad dressing.

The Simple Smoothie

A very easy way to consume fruits and vegetables is to make them into a smoothie. Here's a basic smoothie I make regularly and have as part of my breakfast or lunch. This smoothie contains two servings of veggies, two servings of fruit, one serving dairy and an extra veggie if you count the greens!

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup fluid (flavored Kefir, fruit juice, milk)
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- One Half an unpeeled cucumber or summer squash cut in pieces
- One cup fruit (melon, apple, berries)
- Handful of salad greens (optional)
- Honey or maple syrup if it needs sweetness

Place in a blender and whirl until the ingredients are liquified. Add more fluid if necessary.

Have fun playing with various fruits and veggies. I like this particular smoothie because it isn't too thick and it's easy to drink. I like that it isn't too sweet. Sometimes I make a smoothie around 10 a.m. and drink half of it. I store the rest in a glass jar and have it as an afternoon snack!

You can also make one directly in a large drinking glass using a stick blender. You'll have to adjust the amounts so everything fits in the glass and there is about 2" headspace for the whirling of the fluid.

6. Nurturing the Body: Getting Physical

“A calm, settled body is the foundation for health, for healing, for helping others, and for changing the world.”

Resmaa Menakem, *“My Grandmother’s Hands”*

Physical exercise never played an important role in our life together. We were both workaholics. We loved our work and we focused on doing our very best at the assignments. We were valued employees and were rewarded with promotions and other benefits. We were so busy doing our jobs that we had no time for physical activities. Neither of us was very athletic. I used to refer to myself as a “motor moron” because I never played sports or went to a gym. Yoga was for “new-agers,” not us!

Imagine the surprise when we learned that yoga was a daily component of the patient schedule during the 30-day hospitalization. Ed enjoyed this morning yoga session, and when he returned home he wanted to continue. We lived ten minutes from the hospital, and after his discharge they let him continue to attend the class.

It wasn’t until years later when we retired that we actively sought ways to include physical activity in our lives. We enrolled in a Sunday morning yoga class. What a difference a little movement made!

I began to notice changes. I didn’t get so winded when a walk took us up a hill. I didn’t have to get Ed’s help lifting or moving heavy items. When we traveled, I could lift my carry-on case up to the airplane’s storage bin. The increase in my physical strength encouraged me to become more physical. We even started doing yoga together at home on a regular basis.

Almost thirty years have passed since then. After Ed’s death five years ago, I started slacking off the walking and the yoga classes. I stopped making physical exercise a priority and I started developing stamina and balance problems. My left knee buckled unexpectedly one day when I was getting up from the dinner table. The diagnosis was torn meniscus and arthritis in the knee joint. The remedy: daily therapy to strengthen the muscles supporting the knee. It was time to resume daily exercise and yoga!

I invested in a watch that monitored my daily exercise and have found it to be a great motivational tool. Every day I aim for 4,000 steps, but as I age, this goal is seldom met. I now live in awareness that exercise is a very important component of how well I feel every day. On those days I don't meet my goal, I don't feel as well.

Let's face it, daily physical activity delivers many benefits. Once I got my knee working again, I joined a nearby gym. I ride a recumbent bike every day for at least twenty minutes. I do yoga stretches and walk. As long as I keep this up, I feel good, but when I am lazy and let it go, my aging body lets me know.

Most alcoholics and addicts are seldom physically active once they are heavily into their addiction. When they are high/drunk they can no longer move their bodies effectively with intention. And mentally they are operating in a world colored by their drug of choice. Once they stop using, they need more physical activity to restore their body to health.

Physical fitness has become a cultural "positive." For the recovering addict, exercise is both positive and essential. Using an addictive drug over a period of time impacts your body in many ways. Users lose their physical strength, which can result in making them more susceptible to debilitating chronic diseases such as heart and lung disease and diabetes. An exercise program that includes strength training and aerobic exercises will hasten their return to full health status. And there is an added bonus - the activities that provide the best return to health also are activities that help reduce stress and promote sleep. People who maintain a regular exercise program are far less likely to relapse!

In the past thirty years we've seen a dramatic shift in the value our culture places on healthy living and physical exercise. Fitness centers and health clubs are found in strip malls and other convenient locations in most communities. All kinds of classes are available on-line and there are numerous workout CDs and DVDs available for purchase or at local libraries.

Even so, there are two big deterrents to exercise for most people. One is finding time to exercise and the other is finding a form of exercise that is enjoyable. Those of us who don't get adequate exercise have a greater tendency towards being overweight, along with increased risk for heart disease, fatigue, muscle tension, back problems, and depression.

We need to include both low intensity exercise and aerobic exercise in our life. Most of us get low intensity exercise during the course of our daily activity (walking, cleaning, gardening). But if we spend a large part of our day sitting, we need to develop ways to get moving so that we maintain our body's flexibility and mobility. A friend of mine, upon returning home after a painful surgery, did not pay attention to her doctor and spent most of her day in her chair. Within two years she lost the strength in her legs and can only move safely around the house with a walker.

Aerobic exercise is more athletic. It's exercise that uses the large muscles and increases our heart and breathing rates. It helps to increase stamina and maintain our cardiovascular system. Many Americans do not get regular aerobic exercise such as running, jogging, swimming, bicycling or dancing.

Walking is a great first step in an exercise program. It's a form of aerobic exercise that can help your body in many ways:

- improves heart and lung function
- creates better sleep patterns
- reduces stress
- improves overall mood
- lessens anxiety, depression

When you begin a walking program, start slowly with a short walk around the block. As you get stronger you can pick up the pace and go longer distances. You can track your walking using a pedometer or a smart watch with a step recording feature. Set a daily goal and record it on your calendar. You'll be surprised at how much better you feel once you get a regular walking program in place.

Current Exercise Worksheet

1. What role does exercise have in your current life?

- ☐ I don't exercise ☐ I exercise sometimes ☐ I exercise daily
- ☐ I exercise regularly ☐ I work out and love to exercise

What could happen to you as a result of not exercising?

2. My Exercise for last week:

Sunday _____

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

Saturday _____

3. Look back on the days you did not exercise. What prevented you from getting your exercise that day? (Be honest with yourself.)

How can I improve my exercise practice going forward?

Exercise for Me Worksheet

People in recovery find these forms of exercise are particularly effective. Rank them in order from 1 - 10 based on their appeal to you:

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking | <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga | <input type="checkbox"/> Pilates | <input type="checkbox"/> Tai Chi | <input type="checkbox"/> Chi Gung |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cycling | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming | <input type="checkbox"/> Health club equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Health club class | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | | | |

Questions to Ponder

- You are more likely to undertake an exercise program if you do it with your partner, a relative, a neighbor or friend. Who might become your exercise partner?
- What is your favorite way to exercise?
- Why do you like this type of exercise?
- What is your least favorite way to exercise? Why do you dislike this?
- What other types of exercise appeal to you? Why?

What exercise resources are available to you:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> nearby park or hiking trail | <input type="checkbox"/> community exercise program
at: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pool | <input type="checkbox"/> DVDs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> condo gym | <input type="checkbox"/> daily TV program on channel ____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> health & fitness club | <input type="checkbox"/> YouTube, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> personal trainer | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> private class offered by _____ | |

Exercise Plan Worksheet for week starting _____

1. Create a personal exercise program for this coming week. Describe what you will do when and for how long:

Day	Exercise	Place	# of minutes
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			

2. Record your experience. What you did, for how long, and how it felt:

Day	What I did	# of minutes	How it felt
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			

3. What was the impact of this week's exercise on your:

Anxiety _____

Stress _____

Sleep _____

Overall mood _____

Other _____

Copy this form and create your exercise plan for next week!

Do Your Own Dance

Years ago, after Ed became sober, we went to a workshop where body movement was a primary focus. We went to learn more about caring for our bodies. Little did we know that it was going to be so much fun. Our instructor got us moving to music according to the way we felt. We were, in fact, creating our own personal dance!

Each time we danced like this, I felt more in touch with my body. I was more relaxed and more open. Not only was this a fun form of exercise, but it was a way of releasing stored up tension. Here are some exercises that you might find fun to include as part of your recovery.

Before you start, be sure you are wearing comfortable clothing. Take off your shoes so you can dance barefoot. Move the furniture so that you have a safe space at least 6 square feet. (A larger space would be even better.) Select a time when no one is around to watch.

Dance Your Favorite Song

- Play your favorite song and move around the room any way you want.
- Play it again - this time stand in one spot and move your body without lifting your feet. Close your eyes and really listen to the music. Let your arms and head and trunk sway. Rotate your hips and arms and shoulders.
- Play it again and this time confine your dance to a very small area - about two square feet. See how many different movements you can make in this tiny area.
- Now dance your favorite tune by making large sweeping movements all around the room; leap, reach, and swirl. To prevent getting dizzy, keep your eyes open.
- Finally, play and dance any way that feels good to you.

Slow Go

I particularly like the “Slow Go” movement because I can get in touch with myself and my muscles. I can feel the tension melt away as I slowly move my body to music.

- Play some sweet music. Then imagine yourself dancing inside a tub of something thick and wonderful like honey or cream. Let your dancing be slow and sensual. As you move, pay attention to your body - one part at a time. Move your head slowly from one side to another, then back and forth, and finally move it around in a slow sensual circle. Notice how the muscles in your neck and shoulders feel as you move your head in different ways.
- Next focus on moving your arms slowly to the music. Reach up slowly and then down as you are moving to the music. Rotate your arms and observe the feeling. After you’ve explored the arm movements, focus on your torso. Move from the waist, then move your hips, move backwards and forwards and observe how wonderful it feels. Finally, focus on the way you move your legs slowly to the music.
- When you have finished, pause to remember all the feelings you had as you were moving. What felt the best? Remember them so you can do them from time to time when you need to relax. I found rotating my waist and reaching my arms upward to be particularly soothing. Now I do them when I need to change positions or even mental points of view. Sometimes Ed and I would do these exercises together and respond to each other’s movements. It was a lovely, easy way to be together.

Tippy Toes and Other Strange Steps

This is a very interesting dance that involves using different parts of your foot! Pick music that doesn’t have an extremely slow or fast beat. Warm up by dancing any way that feels good. Then shift your weight so that you are dancing on your heels. (Your toes don’t touch the floor). It feels strange but it’s fun. Then dance on the outside of your feet. Try dancing on your toes. Finally, decide what feels best to you and finish out the song doing your own dance.

There are lots of ways to gently move your body to music. You don’t have to be a great dancer or even have a partner in order to enjoy dancing as a form of exercise and tension release.

7. Nurturing the Body: Managing Anxiety and Stress

Self-imposed stress has always been part of my life. I don't think I've ever known there to be a time in my life where I could say I was "stress-free." Even now, each day I learn more about recognizing the presence of stress and how to deal with it in a constructive fashion.

When Ed returned home from his early recovery stay at the hospital I was concerned about his well-being and how we would cope with the everyday problems and issues of our newly sober household. Early on, counseling and meetings were important tools to help us deal with our individual anxiety.

It's not unusual to feel anxious when your life has been changed dramatically. One day alcohol or drugs is at the center of the family's experience - and the next day it's gone. Nobody is quite sure what to do. There's a lot of anxiety floating around during these first hours and days.

This is a good time to have a conversation about your new life at home - before anxiety takes over. When anxiety feels overwhelming and difficult to deal with, your partner is most apt to relapse. In the past, the way they dealt with discomfort was to reach for their drug of choice. Now they need to deal with the anxiety without the drug.

Stress and anxiety are integral to the human experience. It is our nature to be alert to danger and our body reacts to it by producing chemicals that help us deal with a potential threat. When we perceive danger, our glands release chemicals like adrenaline and cortisol which provides us with a "boost" in our physical ability to deal with perceived danger. They "amp" us up. They enable us to do things we otherwise could not do, like running faster or lifting an extraordinarily heavy object.

While the presence of these chemicals is important in an emergency, it's not good if our body responds to everyday stresses by producing chemicals that are only needed in extreme situations. Fortunately, there are a number of effective techniques we can use to calm our minds and anxious bodies in everyday situations.

Individuals in recovery need strategies to deal with the cravings and anxiety of sober living. If they can hold off for twenty minutes, the feeling or craving will subside. Distraction is the solution. The most important thing is not to give in to the urge, but rather do something to divert it. Twenty minutes of some type of physical activity is a good way to move (literally) beyond the urge and decrease your stress. Ed found yoga to be one of the best ways for him to cope with stress. Our Sunday morning yoga class was a weekend ritual. We lovingly called it our “Church of Yoga.” We often commented on how it restored and relaxed us.

We also began a meditation practice. We joined a local Buddhist Sangha and attended weekly meetings which included a thirty minute silent meditation practice. I found this to be very difficult and needed additional help learning meditation techniques. Eventually, I found a practice that I could use to quiet my mind and bring me to a peaceful awareness.

I have continued to use meditation techniques to calm me when I feel anxious, upset, distracted, or unfocused. It’s amazing how just 10 minutes of a simple mindfulness practice can shift my energy and bring me to a peaceful, productive state. I have also used a variety of breath techniques, yoga, walking, and art to help me live a less stressful and more meaningful life. I am grateful every day that they are part of my life.

Ways of Dealing with Anxiety

I clearly remember feeling very anxious when Ed arrived home after having completed 30 days in rehab. Relapse was a dark cloud ever-present in our daily life. It was so good to have him back but we both unconsciously responded with caution. I was worried that I might say or do something that would upset him and cause him to relapse.

We both needed ways to redirect our anxiety. One of the most effective strategies for us was to spend 20 or 30 minutes engaged in a physical activity that released our internal stress. Here are a few suggestions for things that work:

- Go for a walk or run.
- Clean the house.
- Hit the gym for a workout.
- Shoot some baskets at a local park.
- Do ten minutes of yoga stretches.
- Play music and dance around the living room.
- Mow the lawn or prune some bushes.
- Get out of the house or apartment and visit a neighbor.
- Set a timer for ten minutes. Sit in your favorite chair with your eyes closed and breathe.

Stress Management Exercises

You've likely heard the term "fight or flight." It's used to refer to your body's physiological response to perceived danger.

Box Breathing is a technique that provides fast and powerful stress relief by calming your fight or flight response. When you are in fight or flight mode, your body feels threatened and goes on high alert, triggering harmful reactions.

Anxiety manifests itself emotionally and physically. While distraction may work to refocus your mind and emotions, your body's reaction to stress may need a different tactic. During an anxiety attack, you may experience your heart rate increase, your blood pressure rise, and your breath quicken. Being in this state of heightened stress (fight or flight mode) too often or for too long can have serious health risks.

Box Breathing helps regulate this area of your nervous system by calming your nerves, relieving stress, and rescuing you from the overwhelming and uncomfortable situations common to both users and their partners. It is a valuable tool for anyone who wants to re-center or promote general relaxation in their mind and body. Some people incorporate Box Breathing into their morning and wind-down routines, making it part of their daily practice. While your body may go into fight or flight automatically, the good news is that you can consciously bring it back to calm.

The Benefits of Box Breathing Include:

- Reduced stress (reduces the production of stress hormones like cortisol)
- Reduced anxiety, panic, and depression
- Relief for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Helps to decrease insomnia
- Helps with Pain management

You can use Box Breathing standing, sitting or lying down - anytime, anywhere!

Box Breathing

Step 1: Inhale for 4 counts

Close your lips and take a slow, deep inhale through your nose while silently counting to four. Try to fill your lungs completely. Focus on taking this breath so that your mind and nervous system become conscious of what you are doing.

Step 2: Hold for 4 counts

At the top of your inhale, hold your breath for a count of four.

Step 3: Exhale for 4 counts

Gently part your lips and slowly exhale all of your breath out for a count of four. Feel the air leaving your lungs.

Step 4: Hold for 4 counts

Close your lips and hold for a count of four.

Repeat for 4 cycles or as long as you need in order to start feeling calm.

It may take a few rounds to get used to this new practice. If you feel slightly dizzy at first, this is not uncommon and will go away as you practice more. If you are sitting, it can help to feel your feet grounded firmly on the floor below you.

The Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT-Tapping)

In the early 1990's, a man by the name of Gary Craig developed a unique method for dealing with anxiety. He called it the "Emotional Freedom Technique" (EFT). It is based on activating specific body meridians to release body tension created by anxiety.

Years ago, I attended a class where I learned to "tap." It is very easy to learn and use. Using a prescribed sequence and a personal phrase/mantra that describes your anxiety, you lightly tap this sequence on specific locations on your upper body or hand, while repeating the phrase. It has been used by many people over the past 30 years to relieve anxiety and promote relaxation and sleep.

I use EFT whenever I am anxious, over-stimulated, or have problems falling asleep. I am so grateful that I learned to tap. Three weeks after the class my mother died and the tapping got me through this very rough time. I use it often, and it is always helpful.

Use the internet to obtain more specific information and instructions about how to tap. I strongly urge you to take a class if you find one. It will help you quickly and easily master the procedure.

My tapping mantra always starts with my anxiety.

"Even though I am" _____

(example: *"very worried that I will not sleep tonight"*)

I love and accept myself now just the way I am.

Mindfulness Practice

Most recovery programs teach their clients a variety of stress-reduction techniques. These hopefully become lifelong practices that enhance their lives. Think of a mindfulness practice as a “time out” for managing stress.

The mindfulness exercise below is good for anyone dealing with the urge to use, or when you just need to quiet your mind. It is especially helpful when you find yourself ranting or raging about something! I use it to clear my mind when I need a personal “attitude adjustment.”

- Sit in a comfortable chair in a room where you will not be interrupted.
- Set a timer for ten minutes so you don't have to think about the time.
- Take three slow deep breaths. Enjoy each as you feel your body starting to relax. When you are comfortable and relaxed begin the next step.
- Focus your attention on some object in the room and describe it in detail, out loud, as if you were talking to someone who is blind.

For example you might describe a chair as follows:

“Directly opposite me I see a rocking chair. It is made of a light wood. The arms are not upholstered. The ends of each arm are carved in the shape of a lion’s head. There are two cushions. One on the seat of the chair. One leans on the back of the chair. There is a yellow blanket that has been placed on top of the back cushion. Both cushions are made from a soft, red, velvet-like fabric. I see cording around the seams of the cushion. The arms of the chair are supported by spindles. Each of the four legs is sitting on little cups to protect the brown carpet the chair is sitting on.”

Saying it out loud is very important.

It keeps you fully focused. If you “think” it, you will not be as present.

Continue describing every visible object in the room with extreme detail until you are finished or the timer goes off.

What makes this mindfulness practice so successful is that it forces your mind to do just one thing. When you are describing the details of your surroundings, your mind can't focus on your anger because your attention is busy looking looking and describing. When the timer goes off, your stress has been ignored for ten minutes. Hopefully it has gone away or is not nearly as upsetting. This will not work as a mindfulness exercise if you do not speak your observations aloud. Thinking about them without speaking will not clear away the stress being held by your body.

Full Body Relaxation

There are many different relaxation techniques. All you have to do is search the internet and you'll be overwhelmed. One of my favorite relaxation strategies is a full body appreciation and relaxation exercise. It can be done lying down or in a chair.

I use this exercise when I am very anxious and feel like jumping out of my skin. Start the exercise by finding a comfortable place where you won't be interrupted.

Thank your body for letting you know it needed a relaxation "time out." Be sure to tell it how much you appreciate it for keeping you strong and healthy. Next, focus on your right foot and ask your toes to completely relax. Work your way up your leg, slowly, taking one body part at a time. Acknowledge your calf, your knee, your thigh, and your hip joint. Then focus on your left leg and acknowledge each part of that leg. Continue working up your body to your torso, your arms, and finally your head, thanking and appreciating each body part.

When you've finished, take a few deep breaths and give another round of appreciation and gratitude for all the ways your body has kept you strong and healthy. Reassure it that you will continue to do your part to keep it healthy both physically and emotionally.

This whole process only takes 15 to 20 minutes, but when you are finished, you will discover that the stress you were carrying has subsided.

Exploring Feelings Worksheet

Part 1

A helpful way of addressing stress is to inventory your feelings. Do it regularly and compare your responses. On days you are restless or anxious you'll probably find that you've circled many negative feelings.

Circle the feelings you are experiencing.

afraid	curious	frustrated	loose	ready to pounce	tired
aggressive	cut off	fearful	love-struck	regretful	trusting
agonized	competent	foggy	loved	relieved	ugly
alive	concentrating	full	loving	resentful	uncertain
alone	dead	fulfilled	manipulated	rich	uncomfortable
angry	demure	good	maternalistic	right	uncommitted
animalistic	detached	grieving	meditative	sad	undecided
anxious	determined	guilty	messy	satisfied	uneasy
apologetic	dirty	happy	mischievous	scared	unfocused
appreciated	disapproving	hateful	miserable	selfish	unfulfilled
arrogant	disbelieving	helpful	needy	self-loathing	unloved
ashamed	disconnected	helpless	negative	serious	unloving
abandoned	disgusted	horrified	obstinate	settled	unprepared
astounded	distasteful	hungover	old	sharing	unproductive
bad	distressed	hot	open	sharp	unsettled
bashful	double-crossed	hurt	optimistic	sheepish	unworthy
beautiful	doubtful	hungry	organized	shocked	upset
bewildered	dull	hysterical	out of control	shut down	used
blissful	dumb	idiotic	pained	shy	wacky
bored	disappointed	in control	panicked	sick	wanted
bothered	ecstatic	included	paranoid	silly	wanting
bright	empathetic	incompetent	paternalistic	smart	warlike
betrayed	embarrassed	indifferent	peaceful	smug	warm
broken	empty	informed	perplexed	sorry	weak
calm	energetic	innocent	pitiful	strong	well
certain	enraged	interested	poor	stupid	whole
clean	envious	jealous	preoccupied	sure	withdrawn
closed	exasperated	jittery	prepared	surly	worn out
cold	excluded	joyful	pretty	surprised	worried
comfortable	exhausted	jumpy	productive	suspicious	wrong
cautious	fat	knowing	proud	sympathetic	young
committed	fidgety	lazy	provoked	tense	youthful
confident	focused	left out	prudish	thin	
connected	ferocious	loaded	puzzled	thoughtful	
creative	frightened	lonely	ready to go	threatened	

Exploring Feelings Worksheet

Part 2

Look at the words you have circled. Write down the top five words that describe your feelings right now:

1. _____ 3. _____
2. _____ 4. _____
5. _____

What has happened recently that provoked these feelings? Chances are that something specific happened recently that brought up these particular feelings.

What can you do about the situation? Are you “stuck”? If you are having difficulty exploring this, you may find it helpful to talk with your partner or a counselor. Write about what your next steps might be.

Note: Be sure to keep an open mind when you are getting feedback from your partner or a trusted friend. It's always easy and reassuring when they agree with your assessment of a situation. But the “gold” in their feedback is their unique perspective.

It is natural to resist negative feedback and become defensive. But when you keep an open mind and welcome information you may be able to see a troublesome situation from a different viewpoint and find new solutions.

8. Nurturing the Body: Sleeping Well

It is not uncommon for folks in recovery to experience many sleepless nights. I certainly did as I worried about Ed's recovery, how it was impacting my life and what the future held for both of us! Could we make it and stay together?

Once alcohol was out of our home it seemed that my sleep problems increased. I'd fall asleep and then wake up and remain wide awake for hours worrying about things - me, our marriage, Ed, problems at work, family and friends. There was no limit to the kinds of things I thought about and how they managed to keep me awake for a good portion of the night. If I was lucky, I managed to doze off for three or four hours but that was hardly enough sleep for my body.

Eventually I realized that this had become a serious issue in my life. My counselor suggested several approaches. She encouraged me to get more physical exercise and she suggested I talk with my doctor

Since then I've explored a number of strategies for sleep. Some strategies have worked for a period of time and then stopped working. I continue to work with a therapist to find the "perfect" solution for my sleep, but I have had to accept the fact that I'm one of those individuals who may never completely resolve their sleep issues. Just admitting this to myself has made bedtime easier.

When I can't sleep, sometimes I get up and read or write until I begin to feel sleepy, and then I go back to bed. Other nights I turn on a podcast and fall back to sleep while I am listening to it. Learning to accept that I can not solve my sleep problem, has helped. I no longer stress out when it's time to go to bed. I accept that some nights I will sleep better than others.

Ed experienced sleep issues early in his recovery period, but as he learned to deal with the stressors in his life, his ability to sleep deeply was restored.

Sleep Strategies

Sleep is an issue for most addicts in recovery. Users have depended on their drug of choice to help them relax and sleep. Once the drug has been removed, it can be difficult to get a decent night's sleep. Those treated in a residential program may be given sleep medicine during the early weeks of their recovery, but there comes a time when they will be on their own.

It is not uncommon for partners to also experience sleep problems. They are embarking on their own recovery programs that involve personal change in many areas and all kinds of issues are coming to the surface.

Ways to Improve Sleep:

1. Use exercise to reduce daily stress.

Exercise and stress are closely related. Most people in recovery are going through a challenging process of developing new life patterns without the use of drugs and alcohol. Codependents are changing their behaviors and becoming more self-directed and self-sufficient. Success in dealing with these life issues result in big shifts and that can cause a lot of stress. Physical exercise is one of the very best ways to help alleviate internal stress. Movement releases muscles that tend to tighten up when one is stressed. Think of it as pressure and release. Stress is the pressure and exercise is the release. When you exercise daily, you increase the probability of a good night's sleep.

2. Limit eating and drinking before bedtime.

Generally it's best to limit the food you eat before bedtime. Try to have your evening meal at least 4 hours before you go to bed. Recent studies suggest that people who consume high carb diets (high sugar and wheat products) before bedtime do not sleep nearly as well as those whose evening meals are high in fats and low in carbs, so think carefully before you load up on big sandwiches, and rich sugary desserts and beverages at dinnertime. They may keep you awake. Light meals are easier to digest and may give you a better night's sleep.

If you need a snack before bedtime keep it light and sugar-free. Caffeine-free herbal teas formulated to support sleep are quite helpful or you might prefer a cup of chicken broth. If you want some solid food, a few low carb rice crackers and some cheese are a suitable choice. The low carb crackers have fewer sugars and the cheese has a high fat content which may help promote sleep.

3. Create a room for sleeping only.

Make your bedroom into your sleep sanctuary. Avoid doing work in bed or using your bedroom as an office. If possible, the bedroom should have the following components:

- A comfortable bed with a mattress that provides adequate support.
- A slightly cool temperature helps one feel warm and snuggly under the covers.
- The room itself needs to be dark and quiet. Special dark window shades, blinds and lined draperies can help darken the room. If the bedroom gets morning sun or there are outdoor lights at night, you will need to take some form of room-darkening action.
- Do not use devices with internet access and other electronics such as television sets in the bedroom. They are most tempting to use when you should be focusing on sleeping. Some believe that the waves emitted from such devices impair sleep.

4. Determine a specific bedtime and stick to it.

Generally most people do well with 7-8 hours of sleep. Plan your evening so that you go to bed at the same time every night and get up at a set time each morning. For example you may start out with a plan to sleep seven hours starting at 11 p.m. and ending at 6 am. Give this schedule a try for one month by staying in bed for those seven hours. Turn off your light at eleven. It may take several weeks for your body to adjust to this plan. If you find you need more sleep, extend the time and set new sleep and wake-up hours.

5. Practice calming activities before bedtime.

To get into a good sleep routine, you'll want to become calm before you go to bed. A warm bath or shower taken an hour before you go to sleep can help relax you. This is a good time to practice meditating or doing a mindfulness exercise.

6. Use a breath exercise designed for promoting sleep.

I use the 4-7-8 method advised by Dr. Andrew Weil. It helps me unwind and relaxes me. I do it right after I have turned out the lights. 99% of the time I use it, I fall asleep within a few minutes!

(see next page)

The 4-7-8 breath technique:

- Place the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth behind your front teeth.
- Exhale completely through your mouth making a “woosh sound.” I purse my lips to do this.
- Close your mouth and inhale through your nose to the count of 4.
- Hold your breath and count to 7.
- Slowly exhale through your mouth by counting to 8.
- Pause a count of two. Then repeat the exercise at least three more times.
- I find I usually fall asleep if I do the exercise a total of five times.

Your sleep is influenced by the following:

- Beverages you consumed in evening. (kind, amount)
- What you had for dinner.
- Snacks consumed before going to sleep.
- Beverages consumed before going to sleep.
- Exercise you had during the day.
- Medications you took before bedtime.
- Relaxation techniques you tried.
- Personal issues on your mind. (stress, problems etc.)

Sleep Diary Worksheet

If sleep problems persist, keep a sleep diary. Some people have long-standing sleep issues. If you find, after a month, that you are still not getting a decent night's sleep (at least 6 hours), start recording your sleep experience using this worksheet. After assembling two or three weeks of data, share it with your doctor so the two of you can talk about next steps.

Date & time you went to bed: _____

Time you woke up: _____

How long you slept: _____

How well you slept: _____

How many times you woke up during the night: _____

Beverages you consumed in the evening (kind, amount): _____

What you had for dinner: _____

Snacks consumed before going to bed: _____

Beverages consumed before going to bed: _____

Exercise you had during the day: _____

Medications you took before bedtime: _____

Relaxation techniques you tried: _____

Personal issues on your mind (stress, problems etc.): _____

9. Nurturing the Spirit

There is a spiritual component to the recovery process which is beyond words - but not beyond belief! It is the acceptance of a force beyond human comprehension that created and maintains the universe - complete with all the galaxies, planets, climate, creatures, and foliage.

We have it within ourselves in the form of our “Higher Power.” One’s spiritual status is a fundamental factor influencing a successful recovery. What exactly do I mean by that? Those of us who are participating in 12-Step programs refer to believing in a “power greater than us” that can restore us.

Words don’t fully capture what that power is:

- a special kind of loving energy
- a “God” or universal being that is our guide
- an overwhelming feeling of total contentment or an experience of increased contentment or peace
- a feeling or inner sense of knowing that transcends words

I marvel at our planet Earth and all the parts that depend on each other to assure the survival of the whole. The cycles of day and night, the changes of the seasons, and the cycling of weather demonstrate the complex interdependence our creator has accomplished.

I marvel at the amazing life that surrounds us: plants, animals, birds, reptiles, and sea creatures - each with their own incredible life force. We are dependent on each other for survival.

Our life force is found within us - our spirit. It doesn’t leave us. It lives in the back of our consciousness, always there, taking care of us. When we lose contact with it or neglect to acknowledge it, it’s still there and available. It can help us deal with our self-destructive and spirit-destructive feelings of rage, anger, and hopelessness.

A successful recovery includes developing this spiritual component. It begins with the realization that each one of us is a spiritual being. The “divine” lives within each of us. It has always been there for us, but circumstance often prevents us from knowing how it can help us live a full and satisfying life.

Developing a spiritual component for your life will help you:

- understand your place in the world
- be able to define a personal sense of purpose
- connect to something greater than yourself
- contribute to the greater good by helping others
- become part of a community of like-minded souls
- incorporate gratitude into your daily life
- reflect on and be accountable for your actions
- make amends for your actions when necessary

For me, the most exciting part of the recovery process was discovering and getting to know my “true self” - physically, mentally and spiritually. Ed and I shared our lives by being together, but basically we were two birds of a feather who could be described as “all work and no play!” We made little time for spiritual practices such as meditation, expressing gratitude and living in harmony with our world.

I was driven by performance, meeting work goals, and proving my worth through my efforts to be “Little Miss Perfect.” I seldom gave thought to social issues and the condition of the world I was living in, from either an environmental or spiritual perspective. All that changed when I started to work on my “self” and began to see myself a part of a much larger “whole” than I had ever imagined. When my ego focus was on “me” it became all about me and my needs, but as I matured, I saw myself in a broader context. I developed an important focus on building relationships and eventually on an even bigger picture that included my community near and far.

Addicts and codependents are stuck in the small world of their immediate needs for drugs or self-validation. A very important element of the recovery experience takes place when we expand our focus to include others. It’s at that point that we begin to develop compassion and respect. We find ourselves expressing gratitude for our lives and we willingly take on the responsibility for projects that develop our skills in serving others, and demonstrating our faith in a “Higher Power.”

Developing My Spiritual Self Worksheet

For each of the following areas describe one way you have developed or expanded or would like to develop your personal spiritual practice:

Compassion:

Faith:

Gratitude:

Respect:

Responsibility:

Service:

Spirit in Action Worksheet

For each phrase below select three words that describe you.

accepting of others, accepting of self, accountable, adventurous, amusing, anxious, appreciative, arrogant, authentic, caring, calm, confident, compassionate, creative, critical, difficult, edgy, empathetic, envious, ethical, excessive, forgiving, grateful, generous, happy, healthy, helpful, honest, humorous, humble, idealistic, impulsive, indecisive, instinctive, kind, joyful, laid back, loyal, loving, moral, open-minded, opinionated, patient, proud, reliable, reserved, resilient, resourceful, respectful, romantic, sad, self-centered, self-reliant, selfish, sensible, sickly, smart, social, spiritual, stingy, talented, thoughtful, truthful, unpredictable

People admire me for being: _____

People dislike me for being: _____

My best qualities are: _____

My least admirable qualities are: _____

I would like to be more: _____

What is one way you have helped someone:

This year? _____

This month? _____

This week? _____

Have you reached out to help a stranger recently? How? Why?

When is the last time you have expressed your gratitude:

For help from a family member _____

For a friendship _____

To your Higher Power _____

What personal qualities would you like to develop more fully?

(See word list above for ideas) Select at least 3.

Look over your answers. What do they say about you?

12-Step Study Worksheet

For each of the steps write one sentence about how the step has helped you grow. If you have not studied the 12 Steps, meet with someone who has been studying them, and interview them to find out how they have benefitted from studying and practicing them.

1. I admitted that I am powerless - that my life had become unmanageable.
2. I came to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity.
3. I made a decision to turn my will and life over to the care of God as I understand Him.
4. I made a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself.
5. I admitted to God, to myself, and to another human being the exact nature of my wrongs.
6. I am entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. I humbly asked Him to remove my shortcomings.
8. I made a list of all persons I had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. I made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. I continue to take personal inventory and when I was wrong promptly admitted it.
11. I sought through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with God, as I understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for me and the power to carry this out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, I try to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all my affairs.

Note: Repeat this exercise several times a year and see if there are any changes to your answers. How have you expanded your life through the 12 Steps?

10. Living with Intention

Hopefully your primary intention of living a sober life is working for both you and your family. Setting that intention and maintaining it over time will bring you happiness and joy. As Ed and I became more and more engaged with sobriety and all of its benefits, our life together grew in ways we never thought possible. We became present for each other and we began living a partnership we never dreamed possible. We took better care of ourselves and nurtured our relationship. We agreed on how we would live our life and we set intentional goals both for ourselves and our relationship.

I don't know when I came to realize that I enjoyed life more if I set goals for myself. I think that I was always goal oriented. I knew that I was much more productive if I had some form of intention to guide me. It's very easy to spend free time flitting from one thing to another and then at the end of the day, discover that you have nothing to show for it. For me, I've learned that planning is at the core of successful and productive living.

Be In Charge of Your Life Worksheet

I have very
little control
over what
happens to me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I make my own
decisions and
fully own what
happens to me.

1. To what extent do you feel you are in charge of your life? Circle your spot!

2. What areas of your life are problematic for you?

3. What can you do to have more control over your life?

4. What solutions are available to help you do better?

Example:

Problem: I don't get enough physical exercise.

Reason: I don't like exercising. I'm out of shape.

Resources: I could go to the local gym.

I could enroll in a light exercise class like yoga.

I could recruit a buddy (from the program?) to exercise with me.

Problem: _____

Reason: _____

Resources: _____

Solution: _____

Problem: _____

Reason: _____

Resources: _____

Solution: _____

Setting Daily and Weekly Intentions

My first full-time job was as a home economics teacher. Teaching this subject required careful planning to make sure I had what I needed for class, including handouts and supplies for demonstrations and student practice. I also had to create lesson plans for each of the classes. Those lesson plans reflected my intentions for the class and how I was going to implement them.

I enjoyed this process. Every Friday I'd reflect on the progress of each class and establish a general plan for the next week. When Monday arrived I knew what I was going to be teaching and what special materials or supplies I would need.

Years later I took a corporate job with a major bank. As part of their staff development and training, I took a class on how to use a daily planner. I discovered that a day-planner was just what I needed to manage the challenge of complex planning.

Every day I faced many intentions such as:

- “to-do’s”
- “must do’s”
- “meetings”
- “would be fun to do”
- “wish I had time for”
- “do when I have free time”

The problem was that many of them floated around on little pieces of paper, on lists, or in my head.

They were all over the place:

- on my desk
- in my purse
- on my bedside table
- in the car
- next to my favorite chair
- tucked in a notebook

I learned how to use a planner to organize all of the ideas so that I could act on them. For me it is the perfect system for managing my time and my tasks. I rely on my planner to keep my life in order. It is part of my daily morning ritual. While I am enjoying my breakfast coffee I sit with my planner and set my intentions for the day - listing each one and then as I accomplish them, I check them off. I seldom complete everything I set out to do. But, because they are on the list, the things I don't get around to doing are not forgotten. The next morning I can decide which items I want to remove or reschedule for another day.

The planner helps me live my life with intention because it focuses me on doing the things that I have determined to be important. The big payoff is that I feel good about accomplishing what is important to me. There's no way I would have been able to complete this book without my planner helping me to reserve time to work on it.

Setting daily intentions really works for me. I am more productive and satisfied with my life when I am able to see what I have accomplished. I accept that some days I will not be able to do what I originally set as my goals. Maybe I'm not feeling up to par or am having a "low energy" day. Or maybe my partner and I decide on the spur of the moment to do something together. That's fine. There's always tomorrow to pick up where I left off today. I set my intentions but they are not written in permanent ink.

It would be easy to let the planner run my life. I try not to judge myself by how well I manage my time and complete my daily list. I see it as a tool to help rather than a task list. Depending on what unfolds during any given day, the plans I establish at breakfast can shift. I refuse to limit my life by excluding opportunities that spontaneously arise just because they are not on the list.

I invite you to try daily planning for the next few days using the planning worksheet on the next page. See how it works for you. There are a number of helpful videos online that will help you get started. You may even decide you want to invest in some type of daily planner. I prefer one I can hold in my hands and write directly on the pages, but you may enjoy using a paperless online planner or planning app. Experiment to find which works best for you.

You can also check out YouTube for videos on planning and using planners. There are many available. Watch a few and see if there's an approach you connect with. Give it a try. If it doesn't work for you, look for another.

Weekly Planning Worksheet

How willing are you to use a planner?

No Way 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Will Try

Explain your rating.

Give weekly planning a try.

- Make 7 copies of the next page.
- In the morning, fill it out with your intentions.
- Take time to think of the things you want to accomplish during the next seven days.

Check the box when the task is completed. If it does not get done, cross it off or add it to your next plan.

At the end of the week:

How did your planning help you this week?

What did you learn from this exercise?

Will you do another week of intentional planning? Why? Why not?

Daily Planning Worksheet for _____

Date _____

Appointment Schedule

8am	_____

9am	_____

10am	_____

11am	_____

12pm	_____

1pm	_____

2pm	_____

3pm	_____

4pm	_____

5pm	_____

6pm	_____

7pm	_____

8pm	_____

Birthdays/Anniversaries

Goals for today

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Must Do

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |

Dinner Plans

Shopping List

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Other

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

11. Creating Your Best Life

As you've traveled through this workbook, you've hopefully come to realize that you, and you alone, are responsible for your life - even with the full support of your partner. It is your responsibility to determine how you view your life and how you choose to live it.

At some point during your recovery process you will experience a shift towards normalcy, after you have adjusted to sober living. Your life will begin to go well without extreme emotional highs and lows. You will have created a healthy lifestyle to support sobriety.

Now it's time to enjoy the fruits of all the hard work you've put into achieving sobriety! It's a time for celebrating your new way of life and moving forward with joy and enthusiasm. You've earned your place in this arena and as I stressed in the last chapter, you are in charge of your life and you can achieve your goals if you live with intention.

After several years of focused commitment to recovery, Ed and I settled into our new normal. He still went to meetings - but not every day or even every week. We had successfully incorporated healthy routines and habits into our daily life. There were seldom emotional crises to deal with. We welcomed the responsibility for creating our own joy and happiness, both individually and as a couple.

Ed pursued his interest in studying Buddhism and in building wooden boats. He also started attending night classes at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology with the idea that he might pursue a master's degree in recovery counseling. I resumed my lifelong interest in artmaking and took painting and calligraphy classes. We used our vacation time to explore new places, and we began planning for our early retirement. We were both clear that we wanted to live a simpler life in a less congested locale and would retire sooner rather than later.

It was during this period that we used several strategies to explore various opportunities and options for our future. I've detailed some of them for you in this section.

Using Affirmations

What kind of person do you want to become? As you begin to see that there may be more effective ways to live your life, you may find affirmations to be helpful. I think back to my favorite children's story which was "The Little Engine that Could." I think I liked it because I believed that, if there was something I wanted to do, I might be able to do it just like the little engine did.

Years later, when I was facing some difficult challenges, I bought myself a copy of the book. I read the book to remind me to think positively. There were many times when I chanted to myself, "I think I can! I think I can!" Instinctively, I was using affirmation to support myself.

An important turning point in my recovery was taking a workshop about using affirmations. Affirmations can help bring positive thoughts into consciousness. I learned ways to create and use affirmations to achieve my personal goals. Many people have found them to be useful in redirecting their lives.

At the workshop, we were given six basic affirmations and instructed to say each one five times in the morning just after waking up, and before we got out of bed. We were to use them again in the evening, just before going to sleep. Integral to the success of the program was that we committed to using them for fourteen consecutive days. I was skeptical, but decided to do it anyway.

Much to my surprise, I found that my negative and self-defeating thoughts shifted. I became more positive about my life. I continued to recite the affirmations long after the program ended and still rely on this positive self-talk to support my life.

The family support group that we participated in as part of our recovery program used a wonderful and universal affirmation to close each session. We would form a circle, join hands, and repeat the following phrase five times. Each time we said it, we spoke a little louder.

"I am a loving and worthwhile person."

This particular affirmation supported the group's bonding, but more importantly, in hard times, it reminded me that I was worthy. When the going got tough, as it often does in recovery, I called upon that phrase to remind me of my "worthiness."

If you are serious about creating a more positive life for yourself, I encourage you to start with the six affirmations on the next page. They are the ones I learned to use in that first workshop. They are universal in nature, but specific to issues most human beings share. Try them for a month. Say each one five times in the morning when you first wake up and then again at night just before you fall asleep.

I wrote them on a card that I kept by my bedside. I also kept a second copy in my purse for whenever things started to go wrong. I found that they helped me get through difficult moments during the day by redirecting my thoughts toward my personal strengths.

The funny thing is that when I started using them, I didn't believe they applied to me. I almost choked as I repeated them aloud. But I made a promise to myself that I would try them for one month. Surprisingly, after several days, they began to become internalized and I started to see their potential in shaping my values and my life. They have become fundamental guideposts for the way I live today.

You can create your own affirmations that relate specifically to your life. For instance, if you are a procrastinator, you probably have a fairly long "to do" list. You may be rationalizing that you'll accomplish tasks when you have more free time. But your list keeps growing. You could create an affirmation to deal with this. It might go like this:

"I enjoy being organized so that I get important tasks done promptly."

What affirmations would help you support your independence rather than your codependence?

When formulating affirmations, craft the words carefully so that they appropriately describe the behavior that you are aspiring to achieve. Be sure to say them five times at least twice a day. If you do this for four to six weeks, you will most likely achieve your new desired behavior.

I used this approach when I stopped smoking. My affirmation was:

"I am a non-smoker."

I didn't say, "I want to be a non-smoker" or "I am going to become a non-smoker." I used specific words that described the actual end result I wanted to achieve. I encourage you to use the affirmations on the following worksheet to create a rich and positive life for yourself.

Six Affirmations for Life Worksheet

The affirmations below were developed by Jim Fadiman and Bob Frager for a workshop they taught at the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology. I am forever grateful to them for the class and the affirmations which helped me to “unlimit” my life.

- I like myself unconditionally.
- I have unconditional warm regard for all people at all times.
- I am aware of, forgive, and learn from my mistakes.
- I am self-determined and allow others the same right.
- I enjoy and maintain excellent health.
- I enjoy the work I do.

In the space below create three special affirmations for yourself to start using today.

Create a Personal Creed

Sometimes it may not seem like you are in control of your own life, but, in fact, you are. A lifetime of experience is driving you and most of it lies deep in your unconscious. One important goal of recovery is to start living your life with awareness by bringing values from your unconscious to consciousness. One of the first steps towards this awareness is to get clear about what you want your life to become.

An effective way to do this is through the development of your own personal mission statement or creed. I found this to be particularly helpful in my own recovery process. I had been reading the book “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” and one of the exercises was to create a mission statement. It took me almost a month to draft. I kept thinking and revising, but when I was done, I found I had a much better understanding of who I was and where I wanted to go. Now I re-read my mission statement from time to time and make adjustments.

In developing your own personal creed you will want to think about the people who influence you and the role you want them to play in your life. You’ll want to think about your personal values and what is most important to you. The list below offers topics you might want to consider. How do they relate and influence your values and the way you want to live? Only you know the answers to this question.

Consider: how you want to relate to: your partner, children, parents, friends, co-workers, work/career, possessions, home, money.

What do you value: education, religion, health, nature, love, friendship, passions, hobbies, interests, skills, talents?

Here is a sample of a personal creed to start your thinking:

- I am responsible for my life and how I feel and what I think.
- I value my partnership and I make it a source for personal growth and richness.
- I stand up for myself and I take good care of myself.
- I live my life so I can grow creatively, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.
- I have reverence for life on this earth.
- I respect others’ opinions and I acknowledge that I am not their judge.
- I am open to the moment and what it has to offer.

[illegible]

Keep this in a place where you can regularly read it. Let it be a reminder of the person you are. Over time, update it to reflect your current life.

It's a New Year! Planning Ahead

Both Ed and I loved the beginning of each new year. January 1st represented a new chapter in our life together. We always spent part of the day reflecting on all that happened during the prior year. We talked about what we might do in the new one. I don't remember exactly when this became a special ritual in our life, but once we acknowledged that it was, we made it an important event.

On New Year's Eve we would go to the deli and choose our favorite grazing foods for a feast. There was always shrimp cocktail, special cheeses with crackers, paté and a bottle of sparkling apple cider.

Before the meeting we'd each do our own independent research about places we wanted to visit, classes we might take, projects related to the house that needed to be done, our individual goals for the coming year and any other topics that we wanted to address (such as getting tickets for a concert series or committing to do more or less of something such as date nights, taking a class together, or entertaining more).

Our meeting began at noon on New Year's Day. We set a beautiful table with our "graze." We would start by expressing our gratitude for all that we had accomplished in the past year and what it meant to us.

This meeting was so much fun! And it was productive as well. We set our joint intentions for life together, talked openly about how we wanted to spend time together and apart, and how all of this would enhance our relationship and our marriage. During the first week in January we would write up our individual intentions for the year and give each other a copy.

I still have those notes from our New Year's meetings, and smile when I read them over. They are a unique record of our wonderful life together and a testament to a very successful long-term recovery program.

Personal Annual Planning Worksheet

What are my personal goals for this coming year?

What is working in my life?

What is not working in my life?

What would I like to keep in my life this new year?

What would I like to change?

What new experiences would I like to have?

What, if anything, is holding me back?

What new things would I like to learn?

What resources can I mobilize to help me move forward?

Partner Planning for the New Year Worksheet

Having our New Year's discussion was a wonderful experience and usually lasted around three hours. I felt a special closeness with Ed as we spent this special time planning our year ahead. These were the questions we answered together.

What is working well for us?

What is not working so well?

In what ways do we want to enhance our marriage?

What can we do together to maintain and/or enhance our health?

What special entertainment and community events do we want to attend?

What trips do we want to take this year?

What home improvements or appliance replacements should be done this year?

What else do we want to include in our family plan for this coming year?

Develop a Bucket List

I got this idea from watching an Oprah Winfrey show where several people talked about their bucket lists. Each had made a list of things they wanted to do before they left this planet. I found the idea fascinating and proposed it to Ed. He agreed that it would be fun to develop.

I made two small (4" x 6") books for our lists. We started by listing things that we always wanted to do but never had done. I remember it was easy to come up with the first 20-30 items, and then I drew a blank! Ed had the same problem. We knew there were many more things we would want to include on our lists but they didn't come quickly to mind. So we took off for the library and began a treasure hunt. We looked at books, magazines, movies, and whatever caught our intention and added to our lists.

Today you most likely have easy access to the internet. Begin your search by looking up the term "bucket list." You will find endless ideas and inspiration for your personal bucket list. Here are some ideas for topics to explore.

- Skills you would like to develop
- New hobbies that appeal to you
- Travel destinations
- Personal challenges master
- Classes you would like to take
- Activities you would like to experience
- Physical achievements

We had a lot of fun creating our bucket lists. We would bring them to our annual New Year's Planning meetings. Typically, we found items from our lists to include in our annual goals. I still have my bucket list booklet and it brings back wonderful memories of our life together. I still set intentions every New Year's Day and review them throughout the year to see how I am doing.

Create a Vision Board

A vision board is a tool you can use daily to motivate you. It consists of words and pictures of images that represent a unique personal goal. It doesn't have to be big but it should be easily visible. Keep your vision board where it will give you daily inspiration.

It is fun to create vision boards for a specific purpose or time frame such as, "How I want to spend my summer," or a personal goal such as, "Increasing my physical strength" or "Learning how to swim."

- First decide on your goal. Write it down and use it as the title for your vision board.
- Collect images related to your goal using old magazines. You can often find them at recycling centers. Select images that help you feel good about your goal. For example, if your goal is to lose 20 pounds, your vision board would include photos, magazine pictures, phrases, and ideas to help you see yourself when you have achieved your goal. Maybe your goal is to get a new job. Then the images on the vision board would depict you and the new job environment including location, salary, clothes you might be wearing, etc.
- Make a vision board that you can look at every day. Don't make it too big. A good size might be 9" x 12" or 9" x 18"(folded in half).
- Use poster board or recycled cardboard from an empty box. Cover the board with plain colored paper or paint.
- Next glue your images (visions) on in a pleasing design and add a title or any other words related to your goal.
- Keep your vision board nearby - in your bedroom or favorite relaxing spot so you can see it and think about it several times a day.

You might want to create several vision boards using goals from your bucket list. This way you can be reminded regularly of your intentions.

Designing Your Future

A good place to start is by clarifying your needs and priorities. We began to dream about our future as retirees when we entered our fifties! Where would we live? What state? What city? Urban or Rural? How would we spend our time? What would everyday life cost there? Were there colleges and universities nearby with programs for seniors? What kind of services were available for retirees? Where was the closest airport (since we knew we wanted to travel)?

As we began to clarify and formulate our new life, we made many lists, gathered information, and explored our alternatives. We took several road trips to explore options once we got clear about the places that seemed most attractive to us.

There are numerous websites and books on planning for relocation and retirement that can help with this topic. We pursued it in depth and it became clear that we were going to take early retirement if we could swing it financially.

It was great fun to explore all our possibilities. Over time we got clear about certain basic elements of our new life. For example, we knew we did not want to live in a densely populated area. We wanted to have a home with individual offices for each of us to pursue our hobbies and an outdoor area for a garden. We wanted to live in a community with a college or university that had extension programs. We wanted the community or neighborhood we chose to be politically and economically compatible with our values. We wanted access to a variety of outdoor experiences with nature. We wanted opportunities to be of service to others.

We kept a notebook with ideas and requirements for our future relocation and had long conversations about our future together. It was great fun!

Then one day, much to our surprise, my employer offered employees over 55 a special early retirement incentive. It was very attractive and we decided that we should accept their offer and move on! This brought us to Tucson, Arizona in the springtime. Here we found just the right place to begin our retirement and continue building a meaningful and rewarding sober life.

Endings and Beginnings - A Final Note

For over 30 years my partner and I had a relationship with each other that centered around the use of alcohol. Once we removed alcohol from our life, our relationship was thrown off balance. Our life together, as we had always known it, no longer existed.

Our recovery became a process of rebalancing both our individual lives and our partnership. We made it through the many stages of recovery intact, and we created a wonderful sober life together in retirement. I believe it was because we each focused on becoming our “best” individual selves.

Be kind to yourself and to your partner and rest assured that if you keep on working your program, eventually you each will find your own way and together you will create a meaningful new life.

As you come to the end of this workbook, my hope is that you have embarked on this journey, and that both of you are approaching the ability to fully live the Serenity Prayer and enjoy the fruits of a 12-Step way of life.

I’ve always loved endings and beginnings. When I was teaching, I liked the end of each semester and the beginning of the new semester and all its potential. I love New Year’s Day. I love my birthday too! These events mark an end and a beginning with all the future has to offer. Each year we celebrated Ed’s first day of sobriety, right up until he passed on. Living with sobriety is a new beginning. It provides you with unlimited opportunities for your life. How will you use this special gift?

May your recovery be all that you want it to be.
May your higher power be your life guide.
And may you find great peace as you travel
your sacred sober path.

Part 3

Resources

Resources

We live in a wonderful age where we have access to a lot of information. When Ed was in early recovery, we mostly relied on books. Now, with the internet, you have easy and fast access to expertise through YouTube, TED talks, internet searches, and online books and videos, just for starters. With the advent of Zoom, Skype, and Facetime, you have access to online therapy and discussion groups any day of the week.

In this section I've outlined ways you can increase your knowledge through these 21st century tools.

Expanding Your Recovery Knowledge and Personal Development

On this journey you will meet interesting people. Here are some ways you can expand your knowledge about recovery and personal development both on your own and in a group. Remember, there is no one direct route to recovery and a good life. There are many alternative routes on the map of life, and you're the driver! Find what works for you!

1. Go to meetings; make friends with others who are on the same journey and share information.
2. Join a discussion group. It may be on a sobriety topic or it could be on something else that interests you and can add to your life such as movies, books, current events. You may want a discussion group that includes your partner and others in recovery, or you may want one that is just for you. There are many groups, both in-person and online, where you can delve deeper. At some point you may consider leading a group yourself!

Tips for leading a discussion group:

- Prepare questions to discuss ahead of time, then share them with the group and allow people to comment.
- Have each person bring a topic they'd like to discuss with the group. Take turns presenting and discussing.
- Watch a TED talk, listen to a podcast, or read something together and then discuss.

-
3. Explore a book. You don't need to read a book cover to cover to benefit from it. It's OK to skim for particular chapters that are of most interest to you. You may enjoy doing this with your partner, each sharing your thoughts on the topic. The bibliography section of this book will give you many wonderful suggestions.
 4. Start a book club. Select a book to read with your group and then convene to share your thoughts.

Discussion points may be:

- What was the most interesting thing you learned?
- Was there anything you found unique or disturbing?
- Would you recommend the advice in this book? Why/Why not?
- On a scale of 1-5, how many stars would you give this book?

Using the Internet for Recovery Research

When I started the recovery process the internet was not an everyday resource for most people. Now it's the go-to resource for information on anything.

However, there is so much information, it is easy to become overwhelmed, and it can be difficult to determine what information is best. Not everything you find will be accurate, timely or relevant. What is “worthwhile” reading will vary from person to person. Some general tips to point you quickly to what may be worth your time are:

1. Know what you are searching for and use good keywords, key phrases, and terms.

Making your search more specific helps you get closer to the information you are seeking. Key phrases should be short, four to five words. Placing quotation marks around key phrases will help your search. Not using quotation marks will search for the general topic and may yield wider but less specific results.

2. Check the source.

Research, recommendations, treatments and techniques are constantly being updated. It can be valuable to search .edu and .org sites and check the posting date for the most recent information on these topics. On the other hand, if you are searching for “ways to start a spiritual practice,” or “relaxation techniques,” you may find excellent information that has been around for a while. It's a good idea to check the URL (website address in the search bar) and decide if it seems reliable.

3. Look beyond the first few results.

Search engines use complex page-ranking algorithms. Sources near the top may be the best, or they may be paid for. Words like “ad” or “sponsored” can alert you to these. Generally, for-profit sites that sell products are not the best resources.

4. Avoid website claims and promises that seem too good to be true.

This isn't easy work.

5. Look for endorsements by reputable organizations.

Groups like 12step.org or SAMHSA.gov. (SAMHSA stands for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), as well as Alcoholics Anonymous, offer current and helpful information.

6. Search for authors you recognize and enjoy from your recovery reading.

7. Check academic and professional credentials and practical experience when investigating authors or therapists.

8. Understand which sites to visit.

Opinion and commentary sites usually have .com URLs. Statistical, scientific, and factual information can be found on sites ending with .gov, .edu, and .org.

9. Pay attention to what resonates with you! Evaluate what you've found.

This may be very different from person to person but as long as you are getting reliable, correct information, you're on the right track. To search for a specific word or concept in an article, use command-F or control-F on your keyboard.

10. Bookmark as you go.

Bookmarks are a great way to save links that look interesting and that you would like to return to later. You can refer back to your bookmark list anytime when you're ready to dig for more or revisit something that struck you.

Bibliography

Note to the reader:

I have always been a “book” person. I love holding and reading a book. I love to read books for recreation and information. Libraries and bookstores have been great friends. I offer this listing of books to help you explore your recovery. Some were written many years ago and are no longer in print but the information they offer is helpful. If your local library can not source the book for you, check to see if a used copy is available for purchase on-line.

Books for Starting A Sober Life

Living Sober by Alcoholics Anonymous

This book helped me to understand the ways my partner was changing his life to maintain his sobriety. Read it for information, but please don't use your new knowledge to tell your partner what they should do. 12-Step books are available at most meetings. In many cities 12-Step organizations maintain offices where you can obtain their publications. They have a number of pamphlets that can help you understand the disease and various approaches to recovery. All are low cost and very informative.

Being Sober by Harry Haroutunian MD, Director of the Betty Ford Center

This book provides you with an excellent overview and understanding of the addict's recovery process. It will help you respect the turbulence a recovering addict is experiencing and also encourage you to develop your own personal program for growth. My husband did not talk much about his recovery treatment and I wondered what his treatment was in the hospital. This book can help you understand the treatment process.

The Addiction Recovery Workbook by Paula A. Freedman

This book is a helpful tool for people recovering from addiction. It provides a good overview of the nature of addiction and the entire recovery process. Topics include understanding addiction, a review of the coping skills that need to be developed in order to experience a successful recovery, and a good examination of relapse prevention and what one needs to focus on, all from the interactive experience of hands-on exercises.

Staying Sober - A Guide for Relapse Prevention by Terence Gorski and Merlene Miller

Understanding relapse as a part of the recovery process is very important. This book identifies the changes that occur during recovery and offers useful suggestions to help prevent relapse.

The Alcohol Experiment by Annie Grace

This is a great book for people who drink too much and worry about becoming alcoholics in the future. It's designed for someone who wonders what their life might be if they stop drinking for 30 days. It's packed full of solid information and interesting strategies to explore during a 30-day period of abstinence.

Books for Living Sober

Loving Someone in Recovery by Beverly Berg, MFT, PhD

This book is an excellent complement to the "The Sober Living Workbook for Partners in Recovery." It addresses the many concerns that we have when we are dealing with our addicted partner who is going through the recovery process. It also offers workable strategies to support your recovering partner and meet your own needs during this turbulent time. It discusses concepts of mindfulness, attachment theory, and neurobiology in strategies that are currently successfully used in recovery.

Codependent No More by Melody Beattie

The subtitle of this book is, "How to stop controlling others and start caring for yourself." This book will help you gain insight into how you can take care of yourself. It's easy to read and also offers good exercises that you may find helpful. This book has helped countless others and I highly recommend it to you.

Codependents Guide to the Twelve Steps by Melody Beattie

You will find this book most helpful in working your own 12-Step program. I especially like the bibliography which contains brief descriptions of the books she recommends (much like these notes).

Healing the Shame That Binds You by John Bradshaw

This book provides insight into how shame lies at the core of addiction. In addition to a compelling explanation of the toxicity of shame, Bradshaw presents a number of useful healing strategies. John Bradshaw is a well known personality in the field of recovery. He has written a number of books that people find helpful in the recovery process, and is best known for his television programs on the Public Broadcasting System.

Set Boundaries Find Peace by Nedra Glover Tawwab

This “guide to reclaiming yourself” explores setting boundaries, speaking your needs, and living in peace. This book for codependents can help you establish and maintain healthy boundaries in your life and in your partnership. It will help you find peace in the way you live together and significantly enhance your relationship.

The 12 Steps - A Way Out by Friends in Recovery

This is a wonderful step study workbook you can use either by yourself or with a group. Many 12-Step groups only use their own approved step study materials; other recovery groups use a variety of materials.

A Primer on Adult Children of Alcoholics by Timmen Cermak

I found this book to be one of the most helpful in understanding my own issues and problems. Cermak’s explanations of codependency and how to deal with it, are particularly easy to understand. In my opinion, this is one of the “must read” books for anyone in recovery.

Repeat After Me by Claudia Black

This is a wonderful workbook filled with exercises that will help you get in touch with your feelings. There are sections on self-esteem and family issues. If you find the exercises in my workbook helpful, then you’ll probably want to check it out.

Winning by Letting Go by Elizabeth Brenner

This book isn’t usually cited in the recovery resource books, but I found it interesting and helpful. It helped me see all the ways I try to control my life and my relationships and it gave me new approaches to living without having to control things so completely. It’s an easy book to read with lots of examples.

Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway by Susan Jeffers

This book has been around for a while but it contains helpful information for those of us who are fearful much of the time. Looking back on my life, much of my negative self-talk and controlling behaviors were based on fears that I had developed as a child. Working through my fears has been a very important part of my own recovery.

The Dance of Anger by Harriet Lerner

This great book helped me get in touch with my deeply hidden anger. As I became aware of how I was always putting others first, I began to get in touch with how much I resented the demands that I had put upon myself. I also realized that I didn't know how to ask for what I needed. This book was a true "eye opener" for me and it gave me some ideas about how to better take care of my needs.

Unlimit Your Life by James Fadiman

This small book does a great job of helping one achieve a good life. The affirmations I've offered were originally developed by the author and one of his associates who developed goal setting seminars over twenty years ago.

Books for Developing Your Best Life

These are particularly wonderful books that have helped me over the years.

Hardwiring Happiness by Rick Hanson

This is a favorite book of mine. Rick Hanson is a master writer of self-help books. What I like most about his books is that they provide helpful and proactive ways of dealing with one's life. This book offers a very practical approach to problems. It teaches you how to refocus the bad things happening to you so that you can move forward with confidence, happiness, and security. His methods are simple, science based, and lead you to develop personal strength and wisdom. This is a book I have given to friends when they are having a hard time dealing with their lives.

Neuro Dharma by Rick Hanson

This book translates neuroscience into everyday life that helps us deal with stress, heal emotional pain, and develop healthy daily practices which enable us to access our true nature and natural goodness! The book contains lots of practical suggestions and information that I have been able to incorporate into my life.

What surprised me most was learning about how body chemistry impacts our emotional status. He relates state-of-the-art science to emotions and human behavior and provides guidance on how to take advantage of this knowledge to enhance our lives. For example: developing our capacity for compassion results in our bodies producing chemicals that help support positive feelings.

Dr. Hanson has written a number of books. Others that I have found helpful are: *"Buddha's Brain"* and *"Resilient."*

The Gifts of Imperfection by Brene Brown

The cover announces, “Let go of who you think you’re supposed to be and embrace who you are!” Our own recovery is a program of learning self acceptance. This book is a fine “handbook” that provides information and tools to help us embrace the unique and fine person we are (even when initially we don’t believe that to be true). It’s easy to focus on our faults and flaws based on what we think we should be. This book helps us to begin accepting the “real” person who occupies our mind and body, and to discover how worthy we are. This shifts the goal of our personal journey as we learn to live with joy and to fully engage our authentic self in the pursuit of a wholehearted life.

Brene Brown has also written, “Daring Greatly.” It discusses what it is to be vulnerable and daring in a world riddled with fear and obsessed with control. It explores the purpose and meaning we can bring to our lives if we can find the courage to step into the arena.

Radical Acceptance by Tara Brach

You may be reading “The Sober Living Workbook” because you feel you are in some way an irreversibly flawed person. It’s easy to become entrapped in our own personal suffering which keeps us stuck in old patterns and unable to live an open and fulfilled life. Brach offers a special approach to developing a personal sacred lifestyle informed by self-compassion and love! Sounds pretty foreign doesn’t it? This book relates a way of developing a personal daily practice of self-acceptance and trust. It provides specific tools and methods that help us deal with the ups and downs of our existence. You’ll love yourself a lot more after reading this book!

The Untethered Soul - The Journey Beyond Yourself by Michael Singer

This book is about your relationship with YOU and how every other relationship and experience flows from that. Regardless of your current circumstances or position in life, it speaks deep truth and comfort to the messiness of being human. It will challenge you to digest the world by thinking consciously, releasing burdens, softening your heart and reconnecting to your source. Few books have impacted my understanding of self and truth as much as Singer’s has. This one is a game-changer! A touchstone on your shelf that you will return to year after year.

Peace is Every Step by Thich Nhat Hanh

Thich Nhat Hanh is a Buddhist humanitarian, a spiritual leader and my personal spiritual guide. His teachings have impacted people of all ages and religious persuasions in every corner of our planet. He has written a multitude of books and many of his talks are available on the internet. Of all the books he has written, this is my favorite. When I am my most desperate self I can pick up his book, open it to any page, and start reading, and within minutes calm enters my consciousness and I feel more grounded. It works every time. What more do I need to say? Check it out. It may help you too!

The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz

This book is about the agreements we make with ourselves, others, and the world. When I'm in trouble, I can usually find my way out by recalling the four agreements. Check it out. I think you'll find it a wonderful book and possibly even a touchstone for your life.

Bird by Bird by Anne Lamott

This is the book to read when you're feeling overwhelmed. While it's written for writers, it really is a book about living with grace. It's funny, helpful, contains great advice, and it is very thought provoking.

Do What You Love - the Money Will Follow by Marsha Sinetar

I thought this book would tell me how to find a job that I loved. Well, it did and it didn't. What it was really about was getting in touch with yourself and naturally, once you know who you are, then it becomes relatively easy to decide how you are going to earn your living.

The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook by Martha Davis, Elizabeth Eshelman, Matthew McKay

This comprehensive workbook covers a variety of stress reduction techniques. I found it to be filled with useful information. In addition, there are audio recordings available that accompany the techniques presented.

When Food is Love by Geneen Roth

This book helps you explore how you may use food compulsively to deal with your own emotional hunger. Roth does a wonderful job of helping one see the relationship between food and intimacy. She has also written several other excellent books dealing with food and compulsive eating.

Inside-Out Healing by Richard Moss

The author offers a wonderful approach and helpful tools for enjoying one's life. By focusing on the present, rather than dwelling on the past or anticipating the future, you will learn how to feel more alive and connected to all the satisfaction and pleasure available in the here and now. This book provides you with tools that help you experience your life today fully and with joy.

Waking Up Grateful by Kristi Nelson

Gratitude is an incredible tool for healing. Research on body chemistry and human emotions has revealed that our emotional states produce chemicals that impact our behavior. When we are upset and anxious we are producing chemicals that support these feelings. When we are calm and at peace our bodies are creating chemicals to enhance our calmness. Spending time practicing gratitude is one way of calming the mind and enhancing your well-being.

Gratitudes

Over the many years that this book has been “in process” I’ve had incredible support from many people. I am so grateful for having been given the opportunity and the resources to create this workbook for you.

I’m especially grateful to Ed for having the courage and the fortitude to commit to sober living. I’m also grateful that I was able to be part of this adventure. Our transition to sober living was a traumatic, bumpy and enlightening experience! Our joint commitment to sobriety resulted in an extraordinary and rewarding lifestyle and marriage.

I am also very grateful to each person and organization listed below for supporting this project. Their input has contributed greatly to making this book a useful tool for others.

During our Early Recovery Years:

Anne C, AA in San Mateo County, Al-Anon in San Mateo County, Arelene and Steve B., Peter and Susan F., Stephanie G., Lorrie and Brian G., our family support group leader - Marty, Dr. Jean Nyland, staff on Unit 7 at Sequoia Hospital in 1990, Dr. Gerald Smith, Dr. Barry Rosen, Mary and Bob Y., The Wells Fargo Foundation

In Recent Years:

Marianna Cacciatore, Mary Christoph, Mary Davis, Dr. Mary Flett, Linda Focht, Barbara Rose Gaynor, Nancy Holzman, Lisa Howard, Karen Keller, Alix Maher, Jim S., Shelly Young, Mike and Tama White of Ghost River Publishing, Regina Wright, AA in Pima County, Interactive Media Consulting, LLC.

I am especially grateful for the thoughtful research, editing and support from my personal assistant and friend, Liz Netherton. Without her participation, this book would not be in your hands today.

On a Final Note...

Every day I am grateful for the recovery journey Ed and I embarked on together. And today I am especially grateful for being able to share my experiences with you. I hope you will find this workbook helpful as you embrace your own unique form of sober living.

Mabel Dean
Tucson, Arizona
2022

Serenity Prayer

*God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to
peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
As it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make things
right
If I surrender to His Will;
So that I may be reasonably happy in
this life
And supremely happy with Him
Forever and ever in the next.
Amen.*

Courtesy of Alcoholics Anonymous

If you know someone who might be interested in this free book, please give them a card.

Just print it out on heavy paper or cardstock and cut on the dotted lines.

There's help...
soberlivingworkbook.com
Downloads are free!

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