

INTEGRAL RECOVERY 12 STEPS

STEP ONE

I acknowledge that I have a problem and that because of _____ my life has become unmanageable.

In the first step we admit that there is a problem. Then we identify what the problem is: e.g. chemical dependency, anger control, low self-esteem, depression, bi-polar whatever the problem might be. But first make a list of all the positive aspects of the identified issue. Be thorough, listing them all, and then when you have completed that, list the negatives. When you have examined the good and the bad you will be in a position to make some honest choices based on your findings, and what really matters to you at the deepest level you can get in touch with. When you have completed this task share the results with your guides and therapist and then lastly with your group. With that done, and with the feedback you have received, you and the integral recovery team can make a decision as to whether you are ready to go on to Step Two.

STEP TWO

I take full responsibility for this problem and am willing to do the work necessary to heal.

Taking responsibility is not about assigning blame (and there could be plenty to go around) it is about making a decision that you will do what you can to overcome the problem. "I have this issue that is making a mess out of my life and getting in the way of me realizing my full creative powers as a human being." Make a list of the things that you can do to take full responsibility for your life and this issue/s and another list of what might stand in the way of your committing to do the necessary hard work to heal. Share the results of the two lists with your guides and therapist.

Then write a contract of commitment to take responsibility, in your own words (with some coaching from the guides) for this current life challenge, then present this to your group. From the feedback you receive from your group and the Integral Recovery team you will know if you are ready to move on to Step Three.

STEP THREE

I am coming to believe that there is a way out, and that the way out consists of an Integral Recovery Practice that simultaneously exercises my body, mind, heart, and soul.

Spend some time with a member of the Integral Recovery team and let them explain the IRP, how it works, why it works, and what the practice will look like, and feel like. Take your time. You may have already started some of the practices with your group. Consider what doing such a comprehensive practice could have on your life and your future. Consider the differences it could make in the life of your family. Talk this over with your guides or senior students, then write a page or two on your understanding of the IRP, submit it to your guides for feedback, and when you are ready present it to your group. Then again, with feedback from your group and your guides' approval you will know if you are ready for Step Four.

STEP FOUR

I am ready to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of my past, and find the source of my pain, fear, and suffering.

The idea behind Step Four is that you cannot address the future in a healthy manner unless you have dealt with the past. "What we resist persists." The scary, frightening, or shameful wounds from our past keep us prisoners to the past unless we are ready to face, accept and release these dragons. These past events and wounds keep us prisoners as these locked away dragons drain our essential energy from the present. It takes a lot of energy to keep those dungeons locked all the time. And the truth is, that we don't keep them locked away. The dragons sneak out anyway and show up as unreasonable rage, depression, anxiety, sexual promiscuity, and all sorts of other problems (dragons can be very creative). In step four we identify our dragons. We make a comprehensive list of those things that we have done and/or were done to us that are sources of suffering and are stealing away our life energy. This Integral Recovery work takes a lot of energy. Work with your guides and therapist to make a complete and comprehensive list of your deepest wounds and traumas. The good news is that you don't have to share the results of this work with your group, you may choose to or not. You will be asked to share what the process was like. When you have completed this you are ready for Step Five. Be Brave! Have courage! You are getting free.

STEP FIVE

Having found the source of this pain I am willing to release it.

At this point, you can take the results of your evaluation or dragon finding mission and share what you have found with a member of the Integral Recovery team. This will begin to help you release the dragons from the basement. Dragons are remarkable creatures - in the basement, they are a source of endless problems and havoc, as mentioned in Step Four, such as anxiety, depression, mood swings, rage, self-hatred, overwhelming cravings, etc., but released, they are a source of tremendous transformative energy and power. All the energy that you formerly used to keep those critters locked in the basement is freed up for growth, creativity, and well being: an amazing, almost magical process. Sounds simple. But the reality is a bit more complicated and usually takes more work. Why? Because many dragons are very stubborn and will resist like mad to stay in their comfortable dungeon. Fortunately, with Integral Recovery, we have some very powerful methods for releasing dragons. Talk to your Integral Recovery team and therapist about it.

STEP SIX

Having found and identified the sources of my trauma and suffering I am willing to do the healing work that is available and necessary for my continued growth and happiness.

Step Six and the work that it entails is absolutely essential for lifetime recovery. These days it is recognized that unresolved trauma from the past is one of the main causes of chemical dependency and failure to deal with these traumas is one of the main causes of serial relapse. Not only that but trauma (those dragons again) can fixate us or get us stuck developmentally where we can not continue our growth. Unresolved or released trauma works hand in glove with addictive substances to keep us stuck in inappropriately immature developmental stages. Someone who begins using at fifteen and gets sober at thirty often finds that he/she has been in a state of suspended animation developmentally. They find themselves, at thirty, pretty much at the level emotionally, intellectually and spiritually of a rather undeveloped fifteen year old (the body, however, has gotten old fast).

Unresolved trauma causes constant inescapable stress. And in the brain of the chemically dependent, stress is public enemy number one. The use of substances or other activities becomes the way one copes with this stress. And while drugs treat the symptoms of stress temporarily, the stress continues in the brain unabated and becomes the cause of the near constant cravings for

more of the addictive substance. Stress is your deadliest foe in recovery and if one does not deal with and release the dragons in the basement, continued sobriety, and or growth are largely a forlorn hope.

Another way to look at unresolved trauma is that at birth there is say 100\$ in your emotional psychic spiritual account. If something painful or traumatic happens when you are an infant or toddler (1-18 months) you leave say 20\$ at that stage. If in childhood something else happens you loose another 15\$. In adolescence you loose another 10\$. So, when the time comes for you to make the developmental leap into young adulthood you have only 55\$ left in your account and the leap requires at least 65\$. You just can't pull it off. You can kind of get up there, but you just don't stick. You don't have the necessary funds or psychic energy to get to that next stage. You don't continue to grow because the necessary energy is stuck back there in the shadows with those darn dragons in the basement again. Think of some of the problems such a situation might cause:

- Failed relationships
- Failure academically
- Family problems
- Negative self-image
- Inability to become a competent adult

If chemical dependency is an issue, one does not have the necessary life force to get beyond the compulsive acting out. This is so important for your future and happily you live in a time when the healing modalities are available to overcome and release these issues from the past. You can get free. Your therapist and IRT members can help you do this. It's work, but a lot less scary and painful than you probably think. Get to work - a much better future awaits.

Step Seven

Made a list of everyone and everything that I have harmed as a result of my unconscious and compulsive behaviors.

As we begin to heal and start to have compassion for ourselves as we grow in understanding of the nature of our suffering, we also find that we can start to have more compassion for others. Compassion comes from the Latin "copassione" which means to suffer with. As we begin to become more aware and conscious of the sources of our own suffering we can feel empathy for the suffering of others, and especially for those we have hurt through our unconscious and addictive behaviors. Those who were formerly objects to be used to get what we thought we had to have, become people again, no longer things to be used. Notice that as you continue cleaning up and healing your interior self you are asked to clean up the exterior world. You are being asked in Step Seven to identify the messes that you have made. Again notice that this

is not about people and things that have hurt you, but things and people you have hurt. Write a list, be courageous and rigorously honest as our shameful secrets become dragons. Work with your Integral Recovery Team to do as good a job as possible. Share the results of your list, when appropriate, with your group and share what the process was like. Remember you are not alone and you are getting free.

Step Eight

Made restitution and reconciliation wherever wisely and compassionately possible.

Having identified the messes that we have made and the people we have hurt we must do our very best to clean up those messes. Sometimes a letter or a phone call will suffice, or at least be a good start. At times if your efforts to make things right will hurt the person more than help them at this time, then you must hold off, but make this decision in consultation with Integral Recovery Team members and your group. This Step is about helping the person you harmed and not about your self feeling better. If you do feel better, good, but that is not the main point. A face-to-face meeting is the preferred method, but obviously that is not always possible, while one is in treatment, but you can start.

A sample of how to start the conversation or letter might go something like this. "Hi Bill, this is _____. I know this is awkward and may be painful, but I am in a treatment program because of my chemical dependency and as a part of my program to get well I need to try and fix things with the people I have hurt. First of all, let me say I am very sorry for what I did and if it's alright with you I want to make restitution for what I did to you..." And then get quiet and deeply listen to the other person. This would be a wonderful time to employ some of the listening skills you have been learning. Depending on how long your using career lasted, this process of restitution and reconciliation could take a long time. Take it one day at a time and work with a support person. This is hard work, but again you are getting free.

STEP NINE

As a part of my awakening process I am examining my core beliefs, my values, and life callings.

There is a well known verse from the Old Testament that says, "without a vision the people perish." Without a sense of direction in our lives, what our gifts are, how we can join with the world and participate and contribute in a useful, meaningful way, our recovery journey becomes rudderless and empty. If our lives have no meaning, the answer to the question, "why shouldn't I get

high, or do any other thing that will give me short term pleasure?” becomes hard to answer in a positive way. In that kind of head space -what Victor Frankl called “the existential void” the answer is more often than not “why not?” That is why it is essential that you get a clear sense of who you are, what your gifts are, and what calling you feel in your deepest self that is asking the best version of you to show up. A very simplified way of stating this is: what do you love more than drugs?

In the Gospel of Thomas which was lost for almost two thousand years and found again in 1948 in Egypt, Jesus is recorded as saying: “If you keep that which is within you, it will destroy you, but if you bring it forth, it will give you life.”

That’s another kind of dragon we have not mentioned yet, though this dragon is not something hurtful that we have kept locked away, rather this dragon is something wonderful that we have kept stuffed inside, a dragon of light! If we keep these dragons, these gifts inside us, they putrefy and poison us and cause depression and despair. Finding these gifts and callings is often like being a detective trying to crack a case. You have to look for the clues and begin to put a coherent picture together. Often these clues are right in front of us, but other times they are more subtle. In any case, the journey of discovery to find one’s own path and calling is exciting and exhilarating.

For this step you must write a list of what really matters to you (more than drugs). Also write a list of the things that make you really feel alive. And a list of what you think your gifts are and another list of what others have told you your gifts are. You should call a group and ask for honest feedback from the other students and guides. Having done all this, write it up and present it to your therapist or another Integral Recovery team member. Through this process your internal compass will begin pointing you to your magnetic north. Your way will become clearer.

STEP TEN

I continue to examine my ego structure with rigorous honesty and how my unconscious maps and stories limit or empower my life’s progress and unfolding.

As we progress in our meditative practice, therapeutic emotional work (and releasing dragons), we begin to see that the stories and narratives that we tell ourselves about ourselves and the nature of reality are just “stories.” And our stories are just that, “stories,” fictions that we make up, and in most cases are not really true, and cause us a great deal of suffering and keep us from growing to our greatest version of ourselves. The first step in this process is to identify our stories (many of them are unconscious). For example the story that “Dad

was an alcoholic, and it was somehow my fault,” can be changed to, “Yes, Dad was an alcoholic and it really had nothing to do with me.” First, you identify your stories and then identify the feelings and beliefs that arise from these stories. The next step is to deconstruct the story. What is not true about this story? And then to reconstruct a narrative that more closely reflects the truth and is more optimal for your healing and growth. The new story might read like “Yes, Dad **was** an alcoholic, and that was very hurtful to me, but now I am learning how to confront and release that pain, and it doesn’t have to hurt me anymore.”

To complete Step Nine, identify your stories (meditation and therapy can be very helpful in this regard), and then write them out. Next write out the feelings and beliefs that have arisen from this story. Next write out how these stories have affected your life and the choices you have made. Finally, write a new story that embodies a more true and optimal narrative. This may be a bit challenging because sometimes our stories are like the water a fish swims in. We are immersed in it but are not aware of it. Your therapist and guides can be helpful in making these unconscious stories conscious. And as a wise man said, sometimes just making something conscious is a healing act in itself.

Once you have completed this written assignment and have it okayed by a member of the Integral Recovery team present all your old stories with the new ones to your group. Then with the support of your group, on a separate sheet of paper place the old stories ritually in the fire and both symbolically and in reality release yourself from them.

In your meditation practice (once you have centered yourself) tell yourself the old story in your mind then pay attention to the bodily sensations that arise. Bring your attention to the feelings in your body and let them intensify. Once they are very strong, breathe in deeply and say to yourself, “I completely accept these feelings” and on the out breath “I totally release them.” Continue this until the bodily sensations are released. At this point a prayer of gratitude to your Higher Power might be in order.

Discuss this work with you IR team members and your group. When you feel you are done with this step and with the approval of your IR team, you are ready for Step Eleven.

STEP ELEVEN

Continue to evaluate my integral recovery practice and make changes or adjustments as necessary.

As you have begun to take ownership of your Integral Recovery Practice and have begun to see the remarkable results in self or body, heart, mind and soul, it is time to evaluate your practice and what you have learned thus far in your

journey to greater wholeness, health and happiness. Write a paper that addresses the following questions.

1. What changes have you noticed in yourself since you started your Integral Practice? Address all four lines.
2. What is your motivation, at this point, to keep this practice up for the foreseeable future or as a lifetime practice? Rate this on a scale of one to ten and explain.
3. What changes in your practice do you see a need to make at this time?
4. How can you keep up your practice to maintain your health and continue the growth that you have experienced in treatment? Remember the goal is altered traits not just altered states.
5. Consult with your integral recovery team as you work on this paper and present the results to your group for comment and discussion.

With the approval of your integral recovery team you are ready to continue on to Step Eleven. Congratulations!

STEP TWELVE

As a result of this awakening journey I commit myself to a life of integrity and service.

As we continue the journey of integral growth or recovery there will arise in us a desire to be of service to the world. As we grow from egocentric, to ethnocentric, to world-centric, to even cosmo-centric, that which we identify with and care about will continue to expand and enlarge as our development and growth continues. Initially when we begin the journey of integral recovery the motivation is often, "I'm simply sick and tired, of being sick and tired." But as the journey continues we practice not just to start feeling better, but to become more highly tuned instruments that can express more skillfully and beautifully that which we were born to bring into the world. This requires that we spiritually "step up to the plate" and answer the challenge of our times. If one has been a self-indulgent couch potato, the likelihood of hitting one out of the park or even getting on base is very doubtful, however if we are highly trained and conditioned athletes we will be in a condition to score, indeed. That then is the spirit and meaning of the integral recovery practice. It is helpful each day, as we begin our practice, to bow our heads and dedicate our practice to that which is beyond ourselves, to that greater cause or purpose to which we can dedicate our lives and our practice. Spend some time in your meditation contemplating this and when you are ready write a paper elucidating what that higher purpose is for you at this time, realizing that the purpose will grow and deepen as we grow and deepen. Share the results with you integral recovery team members and then with you group. Congratulations you have finished Step Twelve.