

willingness to change followed by action. We need to accept that if we don't change, we will only repeat the same behavior. We need to honestly look at how we altered our personal program from when we first got clean to when we relapsed. What did we stop doing? What excuses did we tell ourselves? What did we put into our life that was more important than our recovery? Are we now willing to go to any lengths to stay clean?

One day clean is the beginning of hope. Two days clean is the beginning of desire. And three days clean is the beginning of freedom. We often tell ourselves that other members look down on us or dislike us after we relapse. We use this as an excuse to not come back. Yet most members with time have been to enough funerals and would much rather have you in a meeting with a chance to start over. We want you back in our lives. We want you to succeed, but you must be the one to reach out. You must listen to that will to live. After relapse, you may feel like your spirit is broken, that you will never find the passion and joy you first felt in NA. You may not feel the same way, but you can find a deeper, firmer resolve each day.

When we stopped trying to hide our hurt and finally let people in is when we started to grow again.

When the pain was great enough, we finally surrendered. We have tried every way we could, and it never worked until we fully surrendered.

*"We have never seen a person relapse who has thoroughly lived the Narcotics Anonymous Program". \**

Our choices boil down to this: Recovery or relapse. "Basic Text"

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# NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS



CONCERNING  
RELAPSE



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Literary Work in progress. Please copy and share this with your local Home Group for Review and Input

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## **RECOVERY: RESTORATION OR RETURN TO ANY FORMER AND BETTER STATE OR CONDITION.**

Recovery in NA from the disease of addiction is a result of practicing principles in all our affairs.

Recovery happens when we surrender to spiritual principles.

Abstinence does not equal recovery. Recovery is working the steps, finding out who we are, and learning to live. Recovery must be worked on a daily basis or relapse can happen.

The 12 steps help us to experience recovery. We don't use, we call our sponsor regularly, attend meetings daily, have a Home Group, and work Steps in our lives. We are on a path of recovery.

The difference for us between now and then is complete surrender to the process of recovery. We had come to believe that we are addicts with the disease of addiction who must change everything in order to recover. To change we work the 12 Steps and admit that this is about recovery not perfection. We must remain teachable.

Since our early introduction into recovery a lot of questions needed to be answered. Such as, what is recovery and how do you maintain it. The answer is to not participate in any area of our disease. This starts with complete abstinence from all mind- or mood-altering chemicals, including drug replacement therapy medication (DRT's). As we rid ourselves of them, we are able to start a recovery process with the steps.

Remarkable things happen as we start applying Spiritual Principles. Our lives improve as we start facing many self-made obstacles. As we start getting past these obstacles our self-worth grows as does our hope. We find that faith feeds our courage and it no longer matters if it's a mountain or a molehill we are facing. We know in our hearts we can and will move forward no matter what.

We continue to maintain our ongoing recovery by developing a pattern of meetings, steps, sharing and listening. Becoming involved, we begin to feel a part of.

When we stop this process and exert self-will, we begin setting ourselves up for relapse. We don't forget what we had learned; we just wallow in self-pity. Self-will is what almost killed us. Relapse is never an accident. Often others see the signs long before we admit reservations exist in our lives. We find reasons not to go to our regular meetings. We may stop calling the members who know us best. We get angry with the people who love us. In short, we start listening to our addiction, focusing only on the negative.

We became our own Higher Power, our own Group Conscience. Our own everything, the disease was winning. We did everything that we heard in the meetings not to do.

Meeting attendance goes away, spiritual program goes out the door and we're left standing alone again with feelings of emptiness. Once starting the emotional roller coaster, we fall deeper into desperation looking for a way out. When this happens, all avenues generally close and we feel hopeless. Rather than share these thoughts with others we start answering ourselves therefore setting the stage for failure.

## **RELAPSE: TO FALL BACK INTO ILLNESS AFTER APPARENT RECOVERY**

Just like recovery is a process, relapse is a process.

The mental lapse happens first, it usually begins with "I think...(i.e., I can skip this meeting, I got this, I need to take care of family and job first, those people don't know, get nothing from those meetings....). Then it is followed by the spiritual lapse "I don't..." (i.e., need to pray, work the steps, call my sponsor, share at meetings, do the next right thing, be honest with what I'm feeling) ...

The physical relapse (using) i.e. I am, I want, I can, I will) happens last. This is why we need to nurture our spirits with a positive attitude on a daily basis.

When recovery is not our priority, we forget how to live clean and fall back into addictive behaviors, often leading to relapse. We must recover or die. We need to watch people, places and things to guard our recovery to prevent relapse.

When we do not apply the steps in our lives, we are a mess. We stop following through with commitments. Sometimes we never fully surrender. Other times, after surrender and time in recovery, we walk away from the actions and principles that kept us clean.

Relapse is a conscious decision clothed in apathy, complacency and denial. What starts as random thoughts of dissatisfaction and boredom turn into secrecy, self-obsession and an action plan to use. The longer that the internal dialogue stays internal the more we feed oxygen to the fire.

When the question "What if" gets hold of our thought process it begins to take up residence in our heads, ultimately to be answered by "Well, maybe" or "I could just do that". The day comes when "Am I going to use?" is answered by "I don't know". At that point it's only a matter of time before picking up.

We will either actively seek it out, driving to the dope house or liquor store or the doctor's office, or we put ourselves into a situation we think we can control. Physical or mental pain may also initiate an obsession to use.

People who live this simple program do not relapse. A relapse can be fatal. Relapse brought us to surrender our will and way to God and this program.

Return (Dictionary definition) to go or come back, as to a former place, position, or state.

Coming back to the rooms of NA after a relapse takes great courage. To regain recovery takes a