

STEP 3

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of this Power of our own understanding.

We are powerless over gambling - our lives became completely unmanageable, then in Step Two we found that help was available. Ask yourself if you want help and you will realize that you certainly need help or you would not have come to Gamblers Anonymous. If you are going to arrest this illness, you need all the help you can get, so keep an open mind and get going on Step Three.

What must be done? At the beginning just make the *decision* so that later you can turn your will and your life over to your higher power; this willingness is the action asked for in Step Three. At this point you may protest that "I don't believe in God and therefore, this step can not be worked." It can be worked if you realize that Gamblers Anonymous is a *spiritual*, not a religious Fellowship. With an open mind start to realize that you are no longer a loner; indeed, through Gamblers Anonymous we are bound together. We are truly part of one another. This spiritual binding cannot be explained so it seems a Higher Power is at work.

When gambling ceases, a door closes on the past horrors which you have survived. A visit to the past so you won't forget to dwell there brings remorse and self pity, two deadly pitfalls for compulsive gamblers. As the door to the past life closes, the door to a new life opens. There was no faith or hope and now there is. You can see the Gamblers Anonymous program working. Then you progress to the recovery program and eventually to Step Three.

As you develop through the program things happen which seem to be coincidence, but are they? A hopeless case stops gambling, a member out of work a long time gets a job and even the ultimate happens - an insane member gets back his sanity. Coincidences? You do good things and good things happen.

Coping with each day's happiness and unhappiness is becoming slowly and surely a way of life. You must not gamble *today* and you will become better than you have ever been. Progress may be slow but you are grateful in learning what spirituality really is. Love of money is a major problem when most people come to the program. Then money falls into its proper place. It is nothing more than an aid toward a beautiful way of life; no longer is money an end unto itself. No longer are material objects the only aim and ambition. One can't buy health, humility, self-worth, self-esteem, happiness and all the other fundamentals of a serene and contented way of life. These rewards must be earned. A Higher Power and you walking side by side can work together each day so that you can become better than you have ever been. Accept this as the fruits of a master plan. Learn anonymity and other healthy parts of a sound spiritual life. By asking your Higher Power to help you get through the day without making a bet you will get the help you are seeking. That is the essence of Step Three.

How? Honesty, open-mindedness and willingness. This old formula will work for you as it has for so many others. No longer will you be lonely. No longer do you make the decisions. Life has a balance which it has lacked. In a crowd or by yourself, you are no longer alone.

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Step Three asks us to complete the surrender started in Step One and decide to turn over our will to the care of a Higher Power.

1. This opens the door to the Recovery Program.
2. We will receive the full benefit of the program by more effectively working the remaining nine steps in order — avoiding a jump to Step Twelve.

DISCUSS:

- A. Have we already begun this surrender by coming to GA?
- B. What does our admission to being a compulsive gambler represent?

Surrender is difficult because:

1. Our independence is challenged.
2. We don't know how to surrender.

DISCUSS:

- A. How we tried to prove to ourselves and others that we could gamble, excuses we made for losing, and time spent practicing gambling.
- B. Pick one that best represents your independence.

DISCUSS:

Blaming	No trust	Withdrawing
Being Smug, Superior	I know myself	Material success
Judging, Moralizing	Minimizing	Dislike criticism
Analyzing	Defiance	Other _____
Debating, Arguing	Attacking, Aggression	
Justifying	Explaining	

- C. Willingness is the key to surrender/trusting more? Telephoning other members? More meetings? Getting involved in GA?

Step Three promises true independence through our decision to know God's will for us.

DISCUSS:

- A. How have we changed or attempted to change our behavior since GA?
 1. Have we stopped gambling?
 2. Are we liking and caring more about ourselves?
 3. Are we liking and caring more about others?
 4. Do we have a desire to grow and mature?
 5. Other?
 - B. Are our natural goals high enough or do we need to have "higher" goals to obtain happiness and independence?
 - C. What circumstances hold our interest on a continuing basis?
 - D. Boredom . . .
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