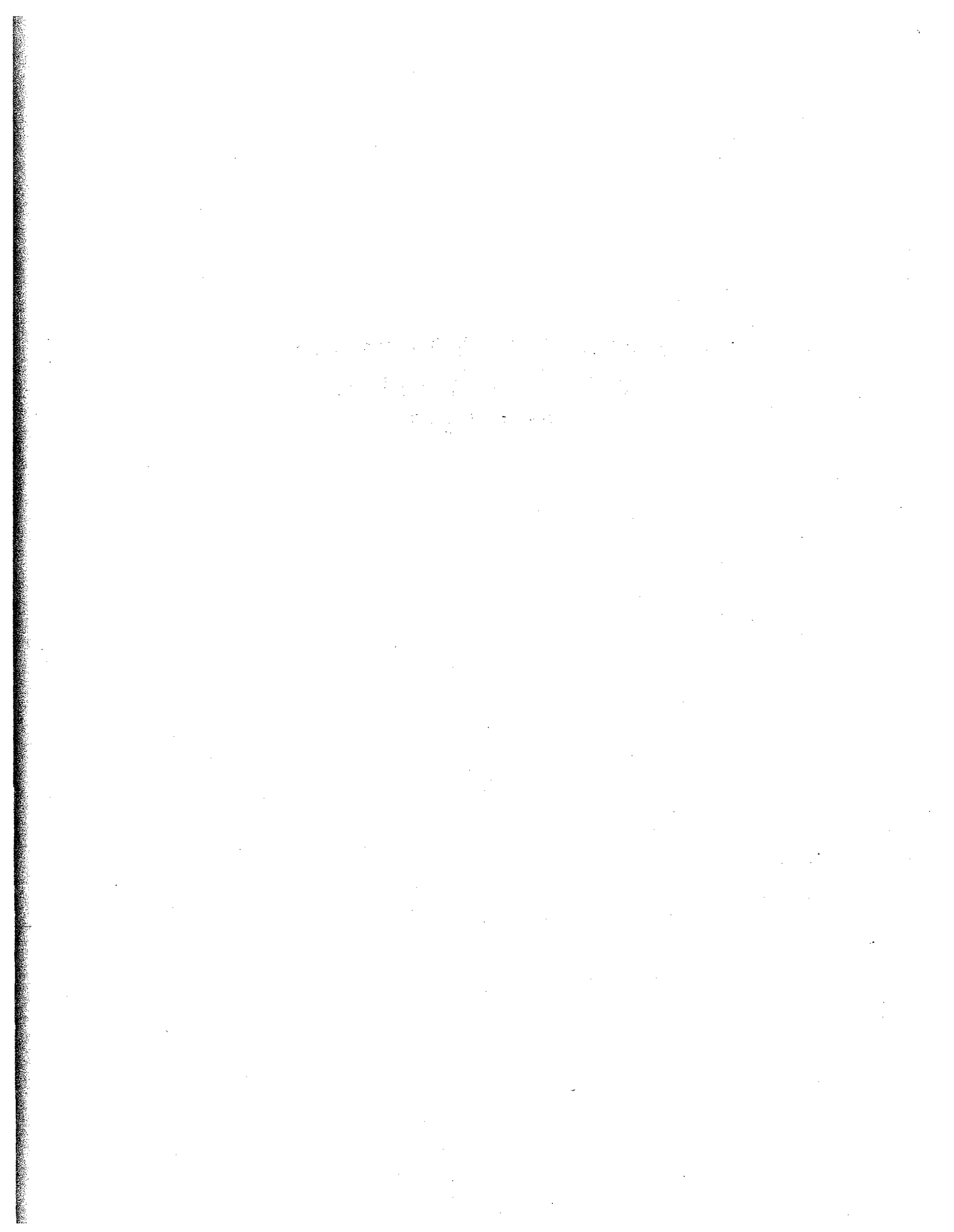


**GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS
WORKING THE STEPS
PAMPHLET**



STEP 1

We admitted we were powerless over gambling — that our lives had become unmanageable.

We at Gamblers Anonymous, believe our gambling problem is an emotional illness, progressive in nature, which no amount of human will-power can stop or control. We have facts to support this belief. We believed, at one time or another, that all of our problems could be solved with a big win. Some, pathetically, even after making a big win, found themselves in worse trouble within a short period of time. We continued to gamble. We found we had risked loss of family, friends, security and jobs. We still continued to gamble. We gambled to the point where it resulted in imprisonment, insanity or attempted suicide. We still continued to gamble and were unable to stop. We fell victim to a belief that if only our financial problems could be solved, we would be able to stop gambling or even be able to gamble like normal people. Many times we swore we would not gamble again believing we had the will-power to stop gambling. We believed a lie. We believed we had the power to stop or control our gambling. Our inability to honestly look at our gambling problem enabled us to continue to gamble. In spite of all of the evidence from our past, we still denied the truth about our gambling.

Upon entering Gamblers Anonymous, we must develop the ability to honestly look at our gambling. This is the first step in our process of recovery. Without honesty, we can not admit our powerlessness over gambling. We must honestly accept, admit and unconditionally surrender to this powerlessness in order to proceed with our recovery. Any reservations we had or may presently have that we can gamble again means we still believe we are not powerless over gambling and that we have not admitted or accepted our powerlessness (either we have power over gambling or we don't).

To those members who have difficulty with admitting their powerlessness over gambling, they should write about their gambling, and the destruction their gambling has caused and their countless futile attempts to stop gambling. Use the "20 Questions" as a guide. Write extensively, thoroughly and specifically using each of the questions as a central focal point. Only with the awareness and the acceptance of the hopelessness, helplessness and desperation of our situation (as compulsive gamblers) can we develop the open-mindedness required for Step Two.

STEP 1

We admitted we were powerless over gambling — that our lives had become unmanageable.

Step one tells us that admitting our gambling defeat is humiliating and we naturally resent this show of weakness.

1. This opposes our instincts.
2. Destruction is at hand when we gamble.
3. We are at war with ourselves when attempting to gamble denying our failure and unwilling to admit our weakness.

DISCUSS:

- A. When did we first discover and/or sense the problem of our compulsive gambling?
- B. Describe instances that prove we can no longer gamble normally.

In GA we discover that admitting our gambling problem to others has become the foundation on which our recovery will be built.

1. Our foundation can only be as strong as our continued belief that we are powerless.
2. Our reservations about being powerless over gambling (doubt), block our recovery.

DISCUSS:

- A. Has acceptance of our "powerlessness" grown while attending meetings?
- B. Have we stopped searching for answers and causes of our gambling problem and started to deal with the problem on a daily basis? Explain . . .

Step One announces we are instinctively shocked when told that will power and self-knowledge will not break our obsession to gamble.

DISCUSS:

- A. How has will power failed in the face of gambling?
- B. What is the meaning of the slogan "Keep it simple."
- C. Have we begun to come to Gamblers Anonymous for our own personal survival — not to satisfy others?

Our failings brought us to GA. By admitting and accepting our problem we become willing to listen and remain open-minded.

DISCUSS:

- A. How we learn by attending meetings regularly.
 - B. Are regular meetings a chore or source of relief?
 - C. Has our ability to listen improved steadily or are we bored at times?
 - D. Is Gamblers Anonymous our mirror?
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STEP 2

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living.

Having been convinced of our powerlessness over gambling and the unmanageability of our lives in Step One, we are now told that only a power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living. (THIS MEANS WE CAN'T DO IT BY OURSELVES). At this point, we must begin to develop open-mindedness. For only by beginning to be open-minded, can we start to understand the true meaning of the step. Most, if not all of our members, have found a resistance or a reluctance to deal with a higher power. The idea of a power greater than ourselves, restoring us to a normal way of thinking and living, does not come easily to us. However, if we truly believe that we are powerless over gambling and have an illness that will progressively destroy our lives, then we desperately need a solution to our illness.

In this step, we are told that there is a solution. Our solution is living a spiritual recovery program. This Spiritual Recovery Program is brought about by a progressive character change that can not be accomplished through will-power. We need a source of power that is greater than ourselves to bring about this change. The change will take place by proceeding with the work required in the remaining steps. What will come with the work is an understanding and practice of kindness, generosity, honesty and humility within ourselves and with others which will lead us eventually to a belief in a Power of our own understanding.

Here, many of us had to examine why we refused to believe in a Power greater than ourselves. We found that some of the obstacles preventing us from attempting to believe were pride, ego, fear, self-centeredness, defiance, and grandiosity. In order to recover from our illness, these obstacles must be eliminated. Here, our sponsors can be of assistance. They can share with us their experiences as to how they overcame their resistance to believe in a Higher Power. We found that writing about our resistance is a good method to help us. We had to put on paper how the obstacles blocked us and led us to refuse to accept a Higher Power.

Most of us did not fully understand what this Higher Power was. At this point, it was only necessary to accept that there was one. Many of us used our sponsor, other members or the Fellowship as this Higher Power, but eventually, as we proceeded with the work required in these steps, we came to believe this Higher Power to be a God of our own understanding. We must have the honesty to look at our illness, the open-mindedness to accept the solution being told to us and the willingness to apply this solution by proceeding on with the recovery process of these steps.

STEP 2

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living.

Step Two warns that belief (Higher Power will remove obsession) may be difficult.

1. Many do not believe a Higher Power and/or God exists.
2. How can we proceed with our recovery?

DISCUSS:

- A. Areas of success in our lives that were decided more by circumstances than our best efforts.
- B. Fear of failure. Give up too easily?
- C. Uncomfortable chores that proved to be beneficial.

It is recommended that all believers and non-believers "Take It Easy."

1. Keep an open mind.
2. Practice other areas of the Recovery Program.

DISCUSS:

- A. Meaning of the slogan "Easy Does It."
- B. Changes in our lives and behavior since we stopped gambling. Good? Bad? Surprised?

Step Two recommends that we stop fighting the thought that a Higher Power may exist.

1. Working other areas of the GA program will show results.
2. It is understood that past efforts at belief may have failed.

DISCUSS:

- A. Judgments we make quickly.
- B. Judgments we make on instinct (gut feeling) versus facts.
- C. Arguing with others to win our point of view.
- D. Catastrophes that occurred because we spoke too quickly.

Step Two promises when we have "cleaned house" our Higher Power will enter to expel our gambling obsession.

1. Open-mindedness alone is required.
2. Belief in open-mindedness is the plateau where all GA members can unite.

DISCUSS:

- A. Have we started to listen more and voice our views less? When did this begin?
 - B. Are we open-minded or fixed in our beliefs? Why?
 - C. Step One of the Recovery Program.
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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.

STEP 3

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

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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STEP 4

Made a searching and fearless moral and financial inventory of ourselves.

Trust your Higher Power and then clean house.

The first three steps have laid the groundwork for Step Four; surrender to a powerlessness to gamble and an inability to manage the problems in one's life. Then acquire a senior partner much greater than oneself to guide and accompany you through the remaining steps. Together all can accomplish so much which cannot be done alone.

Step Four - now you are into the "Cleaning House" area of your life. Now begin an intensive inner search to locate as much guilt, and good, as you can uncover. This search is healthy and practical because dormant, accumulating guilt has long been an enemy. Most compulsive gamblers covered this guilt with a clever facade called rationalization. In the past rationalization tricked us into making very bad actions seem not so bad or even good. Honesty and only honesty can break down this tricky facade. Then you can see yourself exactly as you are for perhaps the first time in your life. Face squarely the financial and emotional wrongs that have been done in order to then forgive oneself.

While doing Step Four how do you uncover all the guilt: A thorough reading of "A Guide to Fourth Step Inventory" available through your group or from the International Service Office can be of great assistance. Then, an autobiographical approach starting with your first bet or even earlier, and moving forward to the present seems indicated. As one moves along many areas of guilt long forgotten will come to mind. Perhaps you will see some of the following — over-indulgence, greed, lying, dishonesty, failure to accept responsibility, self-destruction, destruction of others, excessive waste of time, arrogance, resentment, jealousy and many others. Guilt is personal, therefore one must seek it out by oneself.

Your mind will probably turn to loved ones and the harm laid on them; The dishing out of insecurity so generously. This guilt must be fully realized so we will not be tempted to deal with it later by further gambling. In taking inventory honestly, examine each incident that you can recall from your gambling days. This includes the things you did and those you failed to do: The physical abuse and the verbal abuse which left a lifetime impression. There is much manipulation of people which took from them their right to lead their own lives.

No two gamblers are alike yet none is unique. Each of us has our own collection of guilt which must be unearthed. After discovering and digging up this guilt, one will find it necessary to rid oneself of it. The steps that follow will show how to do this. By practicing these steps you can attain a better way of life based on solid healing principles.

With the help of your Higher Power you can acknowledge guilt as you work the fourth step. Our Higher Power, as we understand Him, can do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

After completing Step Four and having accumulated your personal barrel of guilt you can get rid of it in Step Five and find that you are an O.K. person. Then the good life can be maintained one day at a time.

STEP 4

Made a searching and fearless moral and financial inventory of ourselves.

Step Four tells us that our instincts are God given, yet misdirected instincts lead to serious emotional problems.

1. The need for security, which is instinctive, drives one to become power mad and selfish.
2. Greed, lust, envy and pride are destructive habits.

DISCUSS:

- A. What obsessions and excesses in our lives became a problem?
- B. Are we prone to tolerate bad habits rather than change them?

Willingness to look at our misdirected instincts (defects) is pride in reverse.

1. It is a step toward humility.
2. It is a lessening of our "big shot ego."

DISCUSS:

- A. Persistence to gamble after we discovered we may be destroying ourselves.
- B. What experience brought us to GA/or finally started our belief in GA?

Many members feel that gambling is their only defect.

1. But we identify with other members who claim many defects.
2. We learn that a drastic change in many areas of our lives will be required to maintain the desire to stop gambling.

DISCUSS:

- A. Were we prone to blame others for:
 1. Our failings?
 2. Gambling defeats/losses?
 3. Gambling?
 4. Name other reasons.
- B. What does taking "others inventory" symbolize?

Step Four warns that we must be fearless when taking our moral and financial inventories.

1. Our egos have created many road blocks.
2. Taking 1st, 2nd, & 3rd inventories will give us a clear perspective of ourselves.

DISCUSS:

- A. Methods for taking inventory.
 1. Written.
 2. How Often/When.
 3. Use of "A Guide to Fourth Step Inventory."
- B. Pick your special defect and discuss:

Greed
Anger
Pride

Lust
Envy
Talk too much

Selfishness
Rationalizing
Impatience

Blaming
Bad listener
Other _____

STEP 5

Admitted to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

It is suggested that this step be done shortly after completing Step Four, while the facts revealed in Step Four are still fresh in one's mind. In Step Four one can dig inside oneself, as most compulsive gamblers accumulated loads of guilt. In Step Five one can dispose of this guilt and cope with every day problems. One can — always look back, and must in making amends, but no longer do you have to live — with your personal guilt bag.

Selecting someone to help you with the fifth step is the next chore. The person should fill two needs; one, they should have the experience and wisdom to help see the situation more clearly, and be a person who will keep the conversation completely confidential. Perhaps your sponsor will be the logical choice, your clergyman or a good friend — you must make the choice. Reread the fourth step and use your notes as an agenda. Honesty, openmindedness and sincerity will make the whole thing go more smoothly. Your ego, which won't like the idea of displaying former misdeeds to another human being, will quickly accept the healthy atmosphere. You will see yourself more clearly after Step Four and this insight will remain. Self-knowledge has no bounds. Your new found serenity will enable you to calmly listen and learn. Your awareness will really accelerate. Your relief at having disposed of this guilt will be tremendous.

Humility is a very elusive trait which seems to fly away from one who seems to feel they possess it. If this be so, you must seek to become a well-adjusted person and in so doing, gain humility which one does not realize one has. Do not take this step lightly or minimize its importance. Those who have done this step feel that guilt must be disposed of, and action through this step is the proper way to do it.

Guilt disposed of as suggested, will aid you in so many ways. Self-honesty is accelerated as you clearly see your guilt. No longer will you feel unique. Rather, you will join the human race knowing that you are not alone. What the program teaches comes true. You will realize no two gamblers are alike yet none is an original. Upon entering the program, one now feels a sense of being understood. No longer will you be alone, and knowledge of this is exhilarating. As conflicts arise, however, one tends to pull away from this beautiful union. Now, the fifth step helps resolve these conflicts and you can say to all the world: "I am a human being."
