



# prime solutions®

A prime for life® program

## participant workbook

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**PRIME**  
Solutions™

**Empowering Change**

**Building Hope**

**Protecting Lives™**





# PRIME Solutions<sup>TM</sup>

**Empowering Change**

**Building Hope**

**Protecting Lives<sup>TM</sup>**

**PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK**

**VERSION 1.0**

## **A PRIME FOR LIFE<sup>®</sup> PROGRAM**

**Every participant who attends PRIME Solutions receives a personal workbook. You will use it to complete activities.**

**At the completion of the program, it is yours to keep.**

**This book belongs to: \_\_\_\_\_**

## About the Program

PRIME Solutions has two major purposes. The first purpose is to help people discover what changes they are willing to make in their alcohol and drug choices. The second purpose is to help develop the tools to succeed.

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## About the PRIME Solutions Development Team

The PRIME Solutions development team combines PRI staff and leading experts and includes:

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## Welcome to PRIME Solutions

PRIME Solutions is your program. It is designed to help you reach your goals. How much you use the program is up to you. This workbook belongs to you. It is a tool to help you succeed. It is both a workbook and a reference book.

Since people come into treatment at different times and with different needs, we will not always go through the workbook in order. Write in it! Take notes! Do the activities. You will get more out of the experience that way.

This workbook is copyrighted. You can use the materials in it, but you may not copy it for others to use. Your counselor should have given you a brand new workbook. In that way your counselor is respecting copyright laws and helping the nonprofit organization that developed these materials continue to do its work.

Please let us know about your treatment experience. You can share suggestions directly with the PRIME Solutions development team by sending an email to **[psfeedback@askpri.org](mailto:psfeedback@askpri.org)**.



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Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Do you wonder if treatment will be a waste of time? Sometimes it can be a waste if counselors set goals for clients, and clients pretend they want those goals, even if they don't. When treatment experiences are like that, it can seem like, "What's the point?" Life is too real to pretend, and without honesty, our treatment time together will be a waste. I do not want that and I bet you do not want that either.

Great things can happen in treatment if we are honest with each other and honest with ourselves. Let's start with a simple truth many people find helpful—the only treatment goals that are likely to work are the ones you set for yourself.

So, one of the first things to work on is asking you what you want from this experience. What are your treatment goals? The second thing to work on is asking what you are willing to do to reach those goals. When you are ready, I am here to help you learn some tools and coach you on how to succeed. I will also give you honest feedback about how realistic your goals are and help you discover your strengths. Through this process, you'll decide how trustworthy I am. You will also decide how honest you can and want to be with me. Of course, this is another choice you will make, but it is an important one as it will influence what happens here.

This is a pre-printed letter so these words are written by someone else. But they say what is true for me. I am glad you are here and I look forward to getting to know you in our treatment time together.

Warmly,



## A PRIME THOUGHT ABOUT STARTING TREATMENT

*Think of your treatment experience as a voyage. Every voyage begins from a port.*



**In one sentence, describe the place that you are sailing from.**

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### A Quick Review of the Phases

#### Phase 1: Low-Risk Choices

People in this phase do not use illegal drugs, use prescription drugs as prescribed, and follow the 0-1-2-3 low-risk guidelines for alcohol. For some people this is the 0. For others it is 1-2-3.

#### Phase 2: High-Risk Choices

People in this phase may be using drugs from time to time or may be drinking more than the 1-2-3 guidelines. Alcohol and drugs are pleasant from time to time, but not central to their lives. Their choices put them at risk for problems. Social Dependence may begin.

#### Phase 3: High-Risk Choices plus Psychological Dependence

High-risk alcohol or drug choices are a major part of having fun. High-risk choices are integrated into many parts of life. A person in Phase 3 may find in treatment that they have a diagnosis of either Abuse or (early) Dependence. It may take significant effort to make changes. People in Phase 3 may be able to drink in the low-risk range. Some do so, but others decide it is just not worth the effort it takes.

#### Phase 4: Addiction

In this phase people experience loss of control over their use once they begin. Some also experience withdrawal when they stop using. This is advanced Dependence. In Phase 4, the only low-risk choice is to stop all use of drugs or alcohol.





## WHICH TREATMENT PATH ARE YOU ON?



"Which way should I go?" said Alice.

"That depends on where you want to end up," said the cat.

Alice in Wonderland by  
Lewis Carol

In the story of Alice in Wonderland, Alice came to a fork in the path and did not know which way to go. When she asked the Cheshire Cat for advice, the answer was simple but true. The Cat replied, "That depends on where you want to end up." It is not always clear where a path will take us. Yet every path goes somewhere, and when we choose a path, we are also choosing a destination.

Treatment presents us with a fork in the path. It is a good time to think about what we want in life. During treatment, we will have an opportunity to think about things like relationships, jobs, legal issues, money, self-respect, and many more. For now, let's think in broad terms.

What do you plan to do about using alcohol and drugs during treatment? What are your hopes for after treatment? Do you intend to not use at all? Do you intend to keep using? Some of us know the answers to those questions right now. Others do not. Let's think of two different Treatment Paths to guide us.





## Recovery Path

Some people entering treatment clearly want to end up living an alcohol- and drug-free life. We call this the Recovery Path—a path that leads to living without alcohol and drugs. We will refer to this as abstinence. Many people have had enough experience with alcohol and drugs to know this is the best path for them. They may be in Phase 4 and see that the personal cost of high-risk alcohol and drug choices is too great. Others might be in Phase 3 and may have found the low-risk guidelines do not work for them or at least do not work consistently. They may feel abstinence is the only low-risk choice and it is best to stop completely. People on the Recovery Path may not know exactly how to achieve this goal, but they know this is where they want to end up. All that is required to enter this path is the *desire* to stop drinking or using drugs.

## Discovery Path

Other people are willing to be in treatment and consider change, but are not ready to commit to abstinence. We call this the Discovery Path. The Discovery Path is a time of accepting what Phase a person is in, what choices are realistic, and where they want to end up in terms of alcohol and drug use. Some in the Discovery Path have never tried to make low-risk choices and believe they can succeed. Others might say, “I know I am in Phase 4, but I am not willing to stop yet. I am willing, or have to, come to treatment but I don’t know what else I am willing to do.” Some in Phase 3 will be able to reach their goal on the Discovery Path. Others may reach a point where they are ready to move from the Discovery Path to the Recovery Path.

## Do I need to abstain during treatment if I am on the Discovery Path?

Good question! Think back to what we learned in PRIME For Life. By Phase 3, we have developed both social and psychological dependence. As early as Phase 2, our high-risk alcohol and drug choices begin to change our brains—and our lives—in several ways. These risks increase as we move through the Phases. If we are serious about making any change in our use, we need to be free of alcohol and drugs to fully understand the information in this program and allow change to happen.

Research shows that people in Phase 3 who ultimately succeed in making low-risk alcohol choices are much more likely to do so after a year or more of abstaining. People on the Recovery Path, of course, will want to continue to abstain. For both, abstaining during treatment is a low-risk choice and provides the highest success rate.

For those on probation, abstaining is also important to avoid legal consequences.



### **What if I do use during treatment?**

This is a common question and worry, and we hope that does not happen. But if it does, remember that the first rule of treatment is honesty. Let's talk about it if it happens.

### **What if I want to move from one path to the other?**

The treatment path is a way of describing what you are willing to do. The reality is you are the only one who can put yourself on a treatment path. If you are on the Discovery Path and decide you want to give up alcohol and drugs you have moved yourself to the Recovery Path. If you are on the Recovery Path and decide you want to use again you have moved yourself to the Discovery Path. It can be hard to be honest with ourselves about what is true for us. It is easy to trick ourselves and start wishing or hoping that maybe we can try using one more time and make it work this time. This is why people in 12-Step groups talk about it being a program of "rigorous self-honesty." Are you in Discovery or Recovery? What are you willing to do today?



## My First Action Plan

The **Treatment Plan** you developed with your counselor is a “big picture” plan of what you want to accomplish in treatment. It will guide your counselor in helping you reach your treatment goals.

An **Action Plan** is much simpler. It covers one goal and the things you are willing to do to help reach that goal. Action Plans allow you to take your Treatment Plan and break it into “bite-sized pieces.”

Your first Action Plan is very basic. You have completed your treatment planning session, but nothing can happen if you do not come back. What do you need to take care of to make sure you come to your next treatment session? You might need to take care of something as basic as transportation, or something more complex like staying motivated. If you have trouble with this, ask your counselor to share some Action Plans, or discuss your current situation with you.

**Is your most immediate treatment goal coming to the next treatment session? If so, write that in here. If not, write in your current goal.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Some steps I will take to reach this goal are:**

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## HOW PEOPLE MAKE CHANGES

### Change Happens!

We each have a Treatment Plan we developed with our counselor. We also have our own Action Plan with specific goals for the next few sessions. Reaching goals involves making changes. We may also have different levels of commitment to making the necessary changes. Commitment is only one part of success in making change.

Change is not like an "On/Off switch. It is a process that takes time. Change starts in our thinking and wanting. It then moves through deciding, planning, and prioritizing. The steps need to happen before we make the change happen. You can think of change as happening in five predictable stages.



Think about a change you have made. Maybe you bought a new car, changed jobs, got married, or got a divorce. Can you remember a time when you were not even thinking about making that change? Actually, there was a time when you were not even thinking about making a change. It may seem odd, but not thinking about change is actually the first step in the change process. We have to start somewhere, and more often than not, that is where we begin.

New information may make us think about if change is a good idea. Maybe we realize we need to lose 20 pounds, or we have trouble climbing steps. Then perhaps a friend has a heart attack or we realize that we are just tired of feeling tired. So we begin to think,

"Well, maybe I need to make a change." We are not yet ready to change, but we are thinking about it. In fact, in this stage we usually have mixed feelings. We both want the change and don't want it. We see reasons to make a change and reasons not to. We may be undecided or unsure and feel like we are "on the fence" because we want 2 things that cannot go together. For example, I want to lose 20 pounds, but I do not want to eat less or exercise more. Something has to give, but I don't know what.







## Getting Ready

When we reach a point when we know what we want, we may not be quite ready, so we start "getting ready." If I am going to get a new job, I might get my resume ready, or read the want ads. If I am going to start working out I might buy new running shoes. This is an important stage. As the old saying goes, "Failing to plan is planning to fail." We often move too quickly to our new choice without preparing properly. We need to lay a solid foundation before we make a change.

Next we reach the "I'm doing it" stage. Need we say more?

Well, yes, because few people make changes and never look back. Usually when we make changes we wonder, we doubt, we forget, and sometimes we go back to the old behavior. If I am trying to lose weight, the normal pattern is to lose a few pounds, then gain a few. If I am committed and have planned well, I can finally say, "I'm doing it!"



## I'm Doing it

If I stick with it, slowly the change becomes normal or routine. Now exercising, eating differently, not smoking, or doing that new job just seems normal. It fits me. This change often takes several months or longer. It takes time to develop new habits, new ways of thinking, and new ways of acting. Then I become "the new me"!



## The New Me

At various times, we are each in one of the stages for changing behavior. Right now, some of us are probably in "The New Me" stage for quitting smoking, while others are in the "No Way, Not Now" and someone else is in "Well, Maybe", or "I'm Doing It!" stage. No stage is right or wrong. The stage simply reflects where we are in our own process of change. Moving through these stages is a normal part of how we make changes in our lives. This can be changing jobs or houses, learning to do things differently, or changing habits.

Understanding "how" we change can help us move closer to reaching our goals. This session will help us see where we are now and how to get to where we want to be.





You are not a beginner in making changes in your life. Everyone has made both successful and unsuccessful attempts to change, so you know something about how the change process works even if you might not be able to explain it. There are different tasks that are part of every stage of the change process. You have been working on some of these tasks before you started the PRIME Solutions program. We hope to help you with other tasks as you make choices and make changes in your life. It is important to remember that change is a process to be familiar with. After all, it is your change process!

You may have heard the old saying that you cannot step in the same stream twice because the stream is always changing and always new. The same is true for people. Our lives are streams of change, and we get to be part of that change process.

### **No Way, Not Now!**

Why would I want to do this right now? I don't want to think about it right now. I have no reason to do this. I am not sure I could do this even if I wanted.

### **Well, Maybe**

Let me think about this. I need to find reasons to do this and make sure they are more important than the reasons not to do it. I think I want to, but on the other hand, maybe I don't.

### **Getting Ready**

I see the benefit. This looks like a good idea. What I need is a plan of action. I am going to make this a priority.

### **I'm Doing It**

I have to work at it, but I am seeing some success! My plan is not perfect so I am checking and revising it as I go.

### **The New Me!**

This change is now a part of me. This is just what I do and how I act. I am comfortable with my new lifestyle.

“

*Success does not consist in never making blunders, but in never making the same one a second time.*

”

~ Josh Billings ~



## Hey, I've Done This Before!

**Think of a specific behavior change that you have made in your life that you have been able to keep doing for at least six months.**

Describe it below.

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### How did you make this change?

Discuss the five stages with a partner and what you remember doing at each stage in making your change. Start at the beginning, when you were not even thinking about this change, and describe how you moved forward to make the change.

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### Describe how your experience fits the stages of change?

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### What does not seem to fit?

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### How do the stages help you understand what you experienced?

This is not just what happened, but what you thought, felt, and did at each point.

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## Learning from the Past

"I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. On 26 occasions I have been entrusted to take the game winning shot...and missed. I have failed over and over and over again in my life. And that's precisely why I succeed."

Michael Jordan



Have you ever heard an athlete or a coach talk about looking at game tapes? By looking at the specific skills and "tasks" needed in a sport, athletes can learn where they need to make improvements. We can learn from this coaching practice when it comes to making changes in our alcohol and drug choices. We don't have a video tape of our past efforts to change, but we do have a memory tape. We can play it back, analyze it, and learn from it.

In each of the five stages of change, there are several key elements that could interfere with my change game plan and get me off course. Looking back at a time when we tried to make changes but were not able to succeed, we can identify the things we did not do well enough in our game plan. Below are examples of issues that might have played a role in unsuccessful change.

### **No Way, Not Now—I just never wanted to make the change.**

Maybe I did not develop real concern for my current choices or for making changes. Other people may have wanted me to change, but I never took it to heart. Perhaps I didn't take ownership of the need to make changes. My concerns and commitment are critical for getting and staying out of "No Way, Not Now."



### **Well, Maybe—I was too wishy-washy with my decision.**

I did not work through the good and not-so-good things about my choices. I wanted many things that did not go together. I was not committed or willing to make a change in my choices. The pros did not outweigh the cons for me to want to make the change. There was still a part of me that wanted to stay with my current choices. To get out of "Well Maybe", I need strong reasons for change. I have to be convinced that this change is best for me.

### **Getting Ready—I wasn't committed enough to change.**

My commitment to making a change was not strong enough or decreased as I began to change. Maybe my planning was poor. Maybe my plan was not acceptable to me or I was not ready for this plan. Maybe it was not realistic, or I just did not have access to resources needed to follow my plan. I did not think through some of the issues and was not ready for them, so my plan was ineffective. For example, I thought I could still socialize with my same friends in the same places and found it was easier to continue making high-risk choices. To successfully pass through "Getting Ready," I am going to plan more or build greater commitment.

### **Doing It—I just didn't stick with my plan.**

I realized that my plan was not perfect but did not revise my plan when I needed to. I found myself not following my plan and getting "over confident." I had times of slips and decided to throw out the entire change instead of revising my action plan. I started losing confidence in my ability to maintain change. I got started on making a change but didn't follow through.

### **The New Me—I never made the change a part of my lifestyle.**

I made the change but I did not really integrate the new choice into my life. I did not find good alternatives to support my new choice. Other life issues got in the way of my change. Perhaps I was overwhelmed by a very stressful event. I have to make this change part of me and, not just something I do part time.

“

***Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, "I will try again tomorrow."***

”

***~ Mary Anne Radmacher ~***





## Rewinding my "Game Tape"



Think back on a time you tried to make a change. Play the game tape in your mind and see what you can learn from it. There is no failure here, just the chance to learn from it. Now think about a time you were going to make a change in your alcohol or drug choices but did not succeed in maintaining the change. Describe this time.

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In your mind, "rewind" your tape of this change, just as athletes do when they want to review their performance. Play the tape in your mind and watch your steps along the way. What does the movement through the stages look like? Using the descriptions provided for each stage, focus on the skills or tasks that helped you get as far as you did. What did you not complete or could have done more completely to help move to the next stage successfully?

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**No Way, Not Now – Was I really concerned and interested in making the change?**

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**Well, Maybe – What reasons did I have for change?**

**Getting Ready – Was I committed to do this and did I make a good plan?**

**I'm Doing It – In what ways did I monitor, and revise, my plan when necessary?**

**The New Me – If successful for a while, what roles did being overconfident or not making the change part of me play?**



## Staging My Treatment Plan

### There are three steps to this activity:

1. Think back to your treatment plan and write in some of the long-term goals you identified with your counselor. Space is provided in this activity for 6 goals related to alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, other legal issues and two "other goal" areas. For example, you might write, "*To stop drinking*" as the alcohol goal or "*To pay off my debts*" under "other goal". You do not have to fill in all 6 goals, but write as many goals as you can.
2. Give an honest opinion of where you are for each goal, and put today's date at the point you believe represents your stage. To help you do this, look at the bulleted points below. It's possible to be between 2 stages. Be ready to describe why you think the stage you indicated is accurate for you.
3. On a scale of 1-10, indicate how committed you are to keep working through the stages for that goal. Put today's date on the number.

### Think about these things:

- Be realistic. People often place themselves at a more advanced stage than is really true.
- A man was thinking about building a boat and he bought some wood. He did not have tools or a plan. Really, he was not sure if he wanted a boat. He clearly has taken some action. But is he building a boat? Not all action means we are "doing it." We are somewhere in the process, and that is okay.
- Here are some examples to consider in each of the 5 stages:



No way  
Not  
now!

**No Way, Not Now:** Sometimes in our hearts we really are not considering long-term change. If that is true we are still in "No Way, Not Now" even if we have made some kind of short-term change. That is often true early in treatment, and it is okay.

Well,  
Maybe

**Well, Maybe:** If you have not been drinking or using drugs for a couple of weeks it might seem like "*I'm Doing It*." This may not be accurate. Often people "try out" a new behavior as a part of "Well, Maybe." Are you still uncertain about the change? If so, that is "Well, Maybe" even if you are "trying it out."

Getting  
Ready

**Getting Ready:** You want to change and have already started making change, but you have not really done everything needed to build a lasting change. Have you made a solid plan? Do you know how you will handle difficult challenges? If not, are you ready to plan? If so, that would be "Getting Ready."

I'm  
Doing  
it

**I'm Doing It:** Have you decided to make this change? Have you got a good plan of action? Have you started making the change? If you answered a clear "yes" to all three, then that would be "*I'm Doing It*."

The  
New  
Me

**The New Me:** It is unusual but not impossible at this time in treatment for people to be in "*The New Me*" stage. This would mean you have been doing the new behavior consistently for months, and it has now become a habit for you. It feels natural to always make your new choice.

## ALCOHOL

1. Write your goal.

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2. Put today's date by the stage you are in for this goal.
3. On a scale of 1-10, how committed are you to giving the change process your time and effort to move toward the next stage? (Please circle below)

No Way, Not Now	Well, Maybe	Getting Ready	I'm Doing It	The New Me					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not Committed			Committed				Very Committed		



## ILLEGAL DRUGS

1. Write your goal.

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2. Put today's date by the stage you are in for this goal.

3. On a scale of 1-10, how committed are you to giving the change process your time and effort to move toward the next stage? (Please circle below)

No Way, Not Now		Well, Maybe		Getting Ready		I'm Doing It		The New Me	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not Committed				Committed			Very Committed		





## PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

1. Write your goal.

---

---

2. Put today's date by the stage you are in for this goal.
3. On a scale of 1-10 how committed are you to giving the change process your time and effort to move toward the next stage? (Please circle below)

No Way, Not Now			Well, Maybe		Getting Ready		I'm Doing It		The New Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not Committed			Committed				Very Committed		





## OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

1. Write your goal.

---

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2. Put today's date by the stage you are in for this goal.
3. On a scale of 1-10 how committed are you to giving the change process your time and effort to move toward the next stage? (Please circle below)

No Way, Not Now	Well, Maybe	Getting Ready	I'm Doing It	The New Me					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not Committed			Committed				Very Committed		



## OTHER GOAL

1. Write your goal.

---

---

2. Put today's date by the stage you are in for this goal. \_\_\_\_\_

3. On a scale of 1-10 how committed are you to giving the change process your time and effort to move toward the next stage? (Please circle below)

No Way, Not Now			Well, Maybe		Getting Ready		I'm Doing It		The New Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not Committed			Committed				Very Committed		



## OTHER GOAL

1. Write your goal.

---

---

2. Put today's date by the stage you are in for this goal. \_\_\_\_\_

3. On a scale of 1-10 how committed are you to giving the change process your time and effort to move toward the next stage? (Please circle below)

No Way, Not Now				Well, Maybe				Getting Ready				I'm Doing It			The New Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10						
Not Committed				Committed				Very Committed							



## Two Points in Time

At the beginning of your treatment experience, you answered some questions about your readiness for change.

**According to an assessment, your answers at that time indicated that you were in the \_\_\_\_\_ stage of change.**

**How does your current stage compare to the stage indicated when you took the assessment?**

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**What do you think explains any change you have had since that time? List a few experiences, lessons learned, or other things that have contributed to the change in stage or change in motivation. Remember the stages are cyclic. It is normal to move forward or backward as you make changes.**

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**I have made some changes since I first entered treatment because**

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## How People Make Changes—Take Away



Change is like a puzzle that has to be put together correctly to make sense. Use this opportunity to learn more about yourself and your stage of change. Even if you do not want to change, you are somewhere along the journey. Find the place where you are right now.

### Steps to complete this Take Away:

Go back to the Staging My Treatment Plan activity and pick out one goal from your Treatment Plan. Write that goal below. Then write the stage you are in for that goal.

1. Goal \_\_\_\_\_
2. Stage \_\_\_\_\_
3. Find the stage below that you are in for that goal. Then put a check in the blank for "Yes" or "No" to answer each question for that stage.
4. Highlight or mark any checked items with a "No" answer. These are all tasks for that stage that you have not yet finished.
5. Think about what you can do to complete the highlighted tasks.





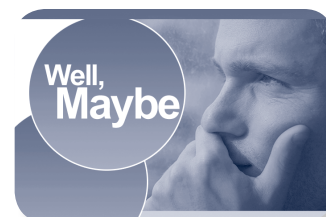


## **No Way, Not Now (I am not considering change now.)**

- \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No Has anyone made comments about my drinking or drug use that I should consider?
- \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No Have I asked one or two family members who I trust if they have any concerns about my alcohol or drug choices?
- \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No Have I asked any friends if they have any concerns about my alcohol or drug choices?
- \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No Have I asked any co-workers if they have any concerns about my use?
- \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No Have I checked with my doctor to find out if my alcohol or drug choices could be affecting my health?
- \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No Do I think it is possible I might be fooling myself about how I view my own alcohol or drug use?
- \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No Do I believe I am a person who could change if I wanted to?
- \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No Have I looked closely to see if important and valued parts of my life are being threatened by my choices?
- \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No Even though I may not be ready to do anything about it, do I have any concerns about my current drinking or drug choices?



## Well, Maybe (I have concerns and reasons for and against change.)



- ☐ Yes ☐ No Have I made a list of the pros (good things) about continuing to make my same drinking and drug choices?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Have I made a list of the cons (not-so-good) things about continuing to make my same drinking and drug choices?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Have I identified the pros or positives of making a new choice? (This could be either abstaining or other low-risk choices.)
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Have I identified the cons or downside of making a new choice? (This could be either abstaining or other low-risk choices.)
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Do I know what it would take for me to decide to make a new choice? (This could be an incident, injury, a threat, or realizing it for myself.)
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Do I know the biggest barriers to making a decision to make a new choice?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Can I change my focus from my "problem" to my "solution"?

## Getting Ready (Am I prepared and committed to going through with my new choice?)



- ☐ Yes ☐ No Have I set a date when I am going to begin, or have I already begun?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Have I identified people I should tell about my goal?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Have I asked for support for my goal from others?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is my plan realistic and achievable (What have I done in the past that might help me know whether I will be successful)?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is this change a top priority in my life?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Do I have my energy focused on this change so that I can be successful?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Do I have some alternatives ready in case my primary plan is not as successful as I want?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Am I willing and committed to following my plan?





## **I'm Doing It (One day at a time)**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is my plan working well?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Am I thinking about how to revise my plan to overcome any difficulties?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Am I reaching out for support when I need it?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Am I recommitting myself each day to make sure I reach my goal?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Am I envisioning success and avoiding being negative?



## **The New Me (The secret to sustained success)**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No Do I see myself as a different person or changed in some way now?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Am I watching out for signs of danger that keep me from being successful?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Am I confident and comfortable with my new choice and my new life?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Do I congratulate myself for making a change and reaching one of my goals?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Do I think that others appreciate my new choice and the new me?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Am I continuing to get support for my new lifestyle?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Have I identified the pleasant surprises that I have found in having this new lifestyle?



highlighted tasks.



## A PRIME THOUGHT ON THE JOURNEY



“  
*Success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome.*  
”

~ Arthur Ashe ~

Arthur Ashe was the first African American tennis player to be chosen for the United States Davis Cup team. He was the only player in history to have won the Amateur Championships and the US Open in the same year. That was quite an outcome. But he did not get there by saying, “I want to be famous.” He did it by focusing on every play. By working to make each swing successful, he ultimately became successful. He focused on his journey by playing each hand to the best of his ability for that day.

**What are you doing today to the best of your ability?**

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## THIS IS WHO I AM

Ralph Waite, the actor, has mentioned that he was new in recovery when he started his role as John Walton on the long running television show The Waltons. He said that when he first got sober he had no idea who he was. He decided his character was a good man and a good role model. So Ralph made the conscious effort to be more like the character he was playing.



Another person was early in her recovery when she told her sister she had no idea who she was when she stopped using drugs. She said, "I feel like I don't have a personality any more, but I know I want to be like you." Her sister said, "Then borrow my personality until you find your own again."

These true stories might sound silly at first, but they are not unusual. Many people enter treatment feeling like they have lost touch with who they are. Sometimes our high-risk choices have become so central in our lives, it is like they have replaced or masked who we really are. But we are still in there. Our true nature is eager to get out and come to the forefront of our lives again.

This real me—who I am at my core—can be revealed by the things I value most in life.

This session gives us a chance to reflect deeply on the things we value most to help us remember who we are.



## This is Who I Am Application

Think back to the brainstorming we did early in this session when we quickly thought of a couple of ways to finish the phrase, "I am."

**Write an "I am" sentence for each of the top five values you identified.**

For example, if honesty is one of your top five values, you might say something like "I am an honest person" or "I am a person who values being honest."

I am \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## **“Reflecting on My Values” Cards**

**Write your top five values here (the five cards you finished with in the values card sorting activity).**

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**Consider each of the following questions for each of your top five value cards. Share your thoughts with a partner.**

1. This value is important to me because...
2. This value matters to me because here are some things I do to protect it.
3. In what ways were these values influenced by family, personal experiences, or your cultural heritage?
4. What am I doing to live up to the values I have chosen?
5. How do these values fit with changes I want to make in my life?
6. How do these values fit with my goals?



**When you are finished discussing the above questions with a partner, answer these four questions on your own:**

**Which of these cards represent values that define my nature or character?**

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**How does my daily life reflect the values on the cards I have chosen?**

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**How would someone who knows me well describe the way I reflect this value?**

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**Why do these values matter to me?**

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## This Is Who I Am—A Take-Away Action Plan

**What is my top value in my life?**

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**This week I will show how this value helps me choose a direction in my life by...**

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**If I decide to talk to someone about who I am, I will talk to ...**

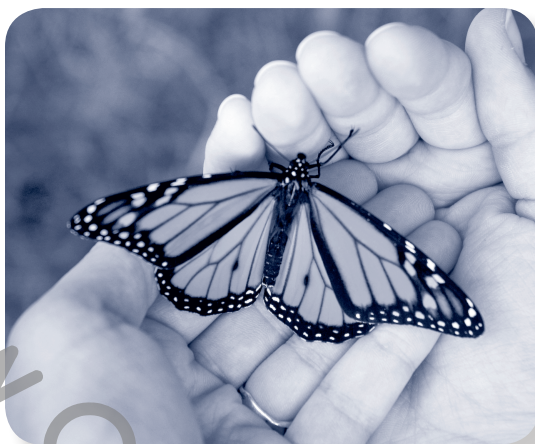
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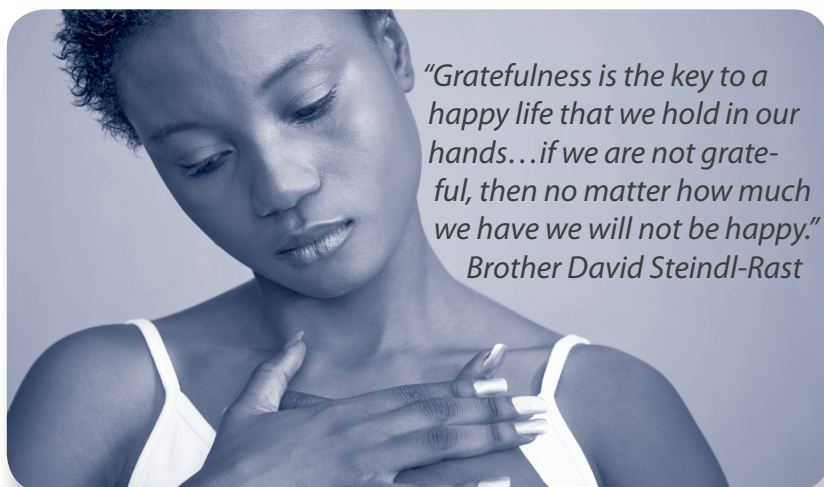


## A PRIME THOUGHT ABOUT HAPPINESS



**List five things in your life you are grateful for:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



*"Gratefulness is the key to a happy life that we hold in our hands...if we are not grateful, then no matter how much we have we will not be happy."*  
Brother David Steindl-Rast

Give this a try, it works!

Every night before you go to bed, go over this list in your mind and say, "I am grateful for \_\_\_\_\_."

Think about each item for a moment. Research indicates people who do regularly express gratitude actually become happier. What a simple way to feel happier!



## Finding the Fire Within

What would life be without inspiration?

Have you ever admired somebody pretty normal doing something pretty outstanding?

Have you ever faced something difficult and knowing someone else had already been through something similar gave you energy, strength, or motivation?



Motivation is a fire from within...

~ Steven Covey ~

Have you ever thought, "If he/she can do that, then I can do what I have to do."

Have you had that "fire in your belly" - a burning desire to get something done?

What is this session about? It is about being inspired by the stories of others to find your own inspiration or "fire within."

### Take Away

How will you keep the "fire within" burning once you leave here? Who are you willing to share your thoughts and reactions from this session with this week?

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## A PRIME THOUGHT ON HAPPINESS



*When one door of happiness closes, another opens. But often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened for us.*

*~ Helen Keller ~*

Let's think more about happiness. Helen Keller was both blind and deaf. Yet she became an accomplished author and educator and found much happiness in life. She had plenty of reasons to be unhappy, but she learned to focus on what was possible, rather than what was not.

1. Choose one relationship in your life. What is one thing you can do differently to be happier in a relationship?

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2. What is one thing you can do to feel happier about yourself?

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3. What is one thing you can do to improve your health?

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4. What is one thing you can do to improve your job performance?

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5. What is another "door to happiness" you can identify?

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## Getting Off the Seesaw

Up. Down. Up. Down. I want it, I don't want it. Sometimes making a change is like being on a seesaw. In fact, a seesaw could be the slogan for the "Well, Maybe" stage. When we are in "Well, Maybe," we see the benefits of changing and the benefits of not changing. It may seem we will never make up our minds. One minute we want to change, the next we do not. This is called ambivalence.

Author, David Seabury described ambivalence as a "collision between thought and feeling." Our feelings tell us one thing and our thoughts tell us another. One minute we experience the thought and the next minute the feeling. This happens if we let ourselves consider only one thing at a time.

Think back to when you were a kid. Did you ever stand in the middle of a seesaw and try to balance? Ambivalence is like trying to balance ourselves in the middle of a seesaw. First we think about how good it would be to change and we go toward one end of the see saw. Then we have a feeling of how scary it is to make that change, and we go toward the other end.

So how do we find balance and get off the seesaw? It is hard at first, but by getting in the middle of the "collision between our thoughts and feelings" and standing still, we can get balanced. We do that by getting more information. We also do it by figuring out what we value the most.

This activity helps us get more balanced, get more information, and figure out what we value. We will look at the pros and cons we identified in PRIME For Life. Now we will add a new dimension by weighing the importance of each pro or con. Sometimes one very important thing is more important than ten less important things.



“

*Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts.*

”

~ Arnold Bennett ~





## Getting Off the Seesaw (cont.)

Complete each of these sentences.

1. I enjoy drinking/getting high with my friends, but \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I really enjoy getting drunk or high, but \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Low-risk choices really be a drag, but \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Getting high or drunk can be a lot of fun, but \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I feel good when I am drunk or high, but \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Sex is really good when I am using, but \_\_\_\_\_.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ is really fun when drinking or high, but \_\_\_\_\_.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ is great when drinking or high, but \_\_\_\_\_.
9. It's wonderful to \_\_\_\_\_ when I'm using or high, but  
\_\_\_\_\_.
10. I love to \_\_\_\_\_ when making high-risk choices, but \_\_\_\_\_.
11. One of the best reasons to make high-risk choices is \_\_\_\_\_, but  
\_\_\_\_\_.
12. I really like making high-risk choices because \_\_\_\_\_, but  
\_\_\_\_\_.





## Getting Off the Seesaw (cont.)

No Change

Change

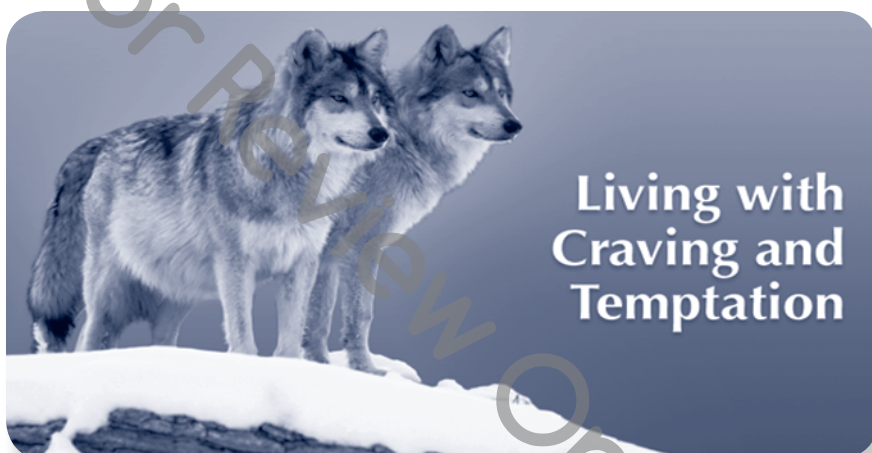


What I learned from this activity is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## TOOLS FOR CHANGE:

### LIVING WITH TEMPTATION AND CRAVING



“  
*Know your enemy and know yourself and you  
can fight a hundred battles without disaster.*  
”

~Sun Tzu~

In his song titled, *The Beast in Me*, Johnny Cash referred to addiction as “the beast.” 12-Step groups talk about alcohol or drugs as being “cunning, baffling, and powerful.” Is it a stretch to think of temptation and craving as “the enemy?” Talk to anyone in Phase 3 or 4 who tried to change and didn’t succeed. They will tell you of the “battle” they had with temptation, craving, or both. So it is realistic to think

of the desire to make high-risk choices as the enemy and craving as the battleground on which we struggle. If we apply Sun Tzu’s words to changing our alcohol and drug choices, this would mean learning the nature of craving and temptation.

In this case, “the enemy” is “within the gates.” The temptation and craving happen within us—within our minds, within our brains, and within our bodies. Some amount of craving begins with psychological dependence in Phase 3 and becomes intense with addiction in Phase 4. Each time we make high-risk alcohol and drug choices, we change our brains a little bit. Over time, our brains make strong connections to the people, places, and things surrounding our use.

Coming to know this enemy means learning about what tempts us, and what sets off our cravings. Sometimes just a thought we associate with high-risk choices is enough to trigger craving. Sometimes a place, a smell, or a sound will do it. Other times, feelings will trigger strong urges to use. Sometimes we can avoid these things. Other times we cannot avoid them, and we need skills to deal with them once they happen.

In the “I’m Doing It” stage, tools lead to success. Tools are useful in many areas of life. Tools can make tasks possible and at times, easier. For example, not many people can pull a nail out of a board by hand, but a hammer or nail puller makes the job possible. Making a quilt is easier when using a sewing machine versus using a needle and thread. Tools can manage temptation and craving. Some tools make management possible, others make management easier.

Life includes opportunities to make high-risk choices, and craving can be expected if you have made many high-risk choices. How you respond to temptation and craving determines the outcome. While unused tools never accomplish anything, learning and using appropriate tools will help you succeed with your goals.



## Here is a Key To Craving

EVERY TIME I  
EXPERIENCE A CRAVING  
AND USE  
I MAKE IT BIGGER



AND IT  
**GETS STRONGER  
AND STRONGER  
AND STRONGER**



**EVERY TIME I  
EXPERIENCE A CRAVING  
AND DO NOT USE**

I MAKE IT SMALLER  
AND IT

GETS Milder

AND Milder

AND Milder

AND Milder



## Craving Cue Cards

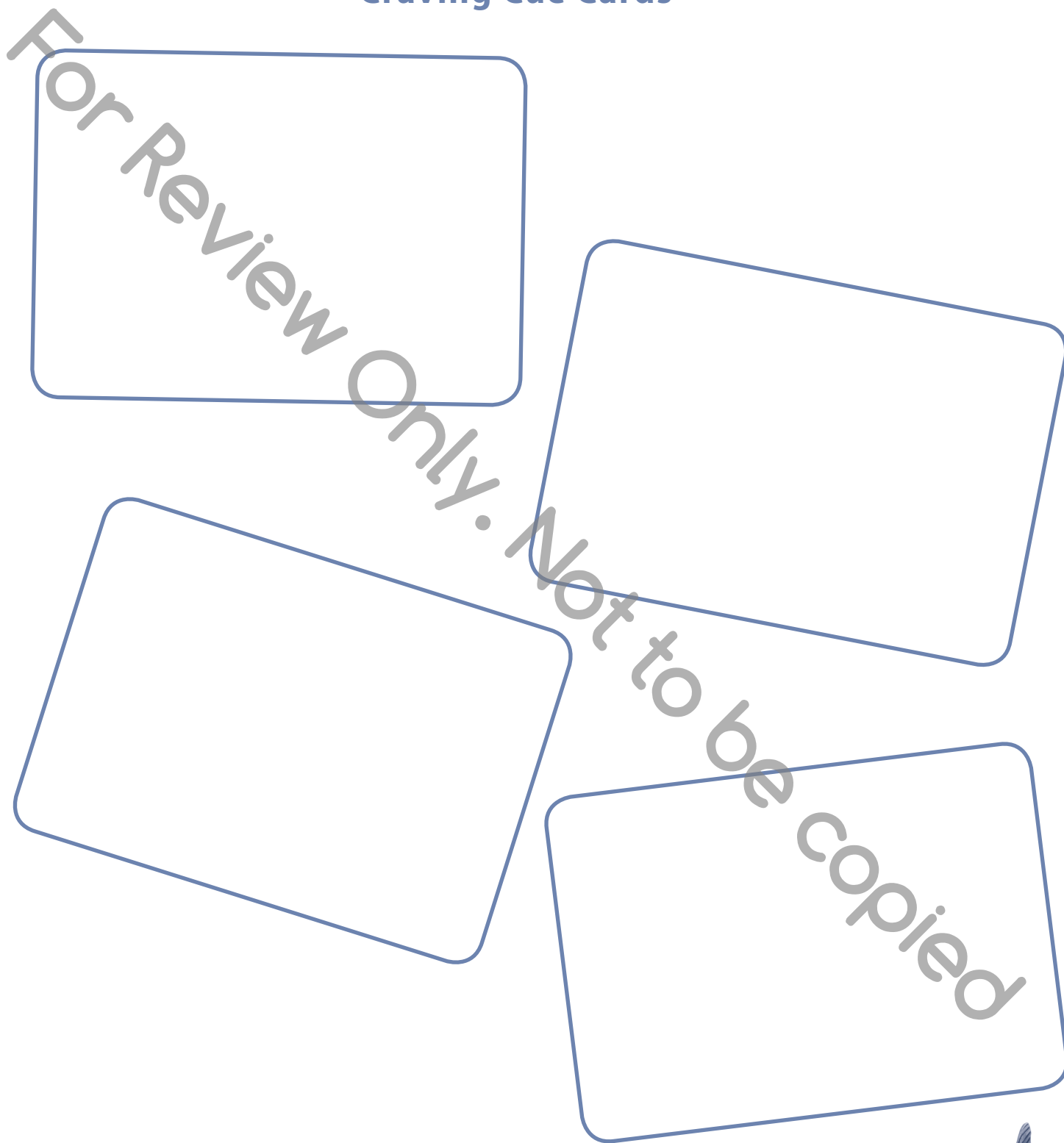
Have you ever seen cue cards used on television? They are used to “cue” an actor on what to say or to tell an audience when to applaud. Cues for making high-risk choices are all around us and they have the same effect in our minds. They cue a response.

On these pages are several “Cue Cards.” On each of the cards, describe things in your life that make you feel craving or tempt you to make high-risk choices. Identifying is the first step in learning to reduce their power in our lives.



## Craving Cue Cards

For Review Only. Not to be copied





## Top Ten Things I Say To Myself When I Want To Make High-Risk Choices

We all talk to ourselves. Sometimes we talk ourselves out of things. Sometimes we talk ourselves into things.

In this activity we will identify the “Top Ten” things I say to myself when I want to make high-risk choices. First we will give some examples, then you can make your own list.

### **1** Step One: Generate your own Top Ten Things I Say To Myself When I Want To Make High-risk Choices.

For example:

1. No one will know.
2. I will only have one.
3. I deserve it—I haven’t had alcohol or drugs in three days.
4. If people are going to make me mad, of course I’m going to make high-risk choices.
5. I never wanted to stop anyway—my probation officer forced me.
6. I have money burning a hole in my pocket.
7. No one goes out without drinking.
8. What are my friends going to think if I don’t make high-risk choices with them?
9. I just got a big raise. I deserve to celebrate.
10. I’m so mad at my \_\_\_\_\_ that I can’t stand it. I’ll show him/her.



## 2

### Step Two: The Grain of Truth.

Usually thoughts like those above have at least a “grain of truth” or people wouldn’t say them. What is the grain of truth in each of your thoughts? Here are some samples of grains of truth for the top ten examples on the previous page:

1. Maybe it’s true that no one is likely to find out if I have a little.
2. In the past, I have sometimes been able to have just one drink.
3. I’ve made a good start in changing my choices.
4. Drinking or using is a very efficient way to cope with my anger.
5. I did not come up with the idea of abstinence all on my own.
6. One of the roadblocks is gone. I have the money for it.
7. I’ve never even heard of someone going on a date without having something.
8. My friends might think I’m an alcoholic if I don’t drink with them.
9. This is my favorite way of celebrating.
10. Getting drunk or high is one way to let my wife know how mad I am.



## 3

### Step Three: Balancing Thought for the Grain of Truth

Because there is a grain of truth in these thoughts, they can be very powerful. Now it is time to “weigh” each grain of truth and find the balance on the other side. Write a “balancing thought” for each one as in the examples below:

1. Maybe it’s true that no one is likely to find out if I have a little, but I will know and I’m the one who has to live with it, not them.
2. In the past, I have sometimes been able to have just one drink, but it’s been a long time since I could rely on having just one consistently.
3. I’ve made a good start in changing my choices, but I’m just beginning.
4. Drinking or using is one way to cope with my anger, but it’s not the only way. How do other people cope with situations like this? I need to do something right away before my anger gets the best of me.



5. I did not come up with the idea of abstinence on my own, but no one forced me either. I decided to change my choices even though other people had something to do with it.
6. One of the roadblocks is gone. I have the money for it. But the money is the cheapest part of high-risk choices. It costs a whole lot more in my job, with my kids, and in (or with) legal problems.
7. I've never even heard of someone going on a date without having something, but I guess they do. I better come up with a plan for dealing with this when I am out.
8. My friends might think I'm an alcoholic if I don't drink with them. On the other hand, they might not even notice. Not everyone spends all their time thinking about me.
9. This is my favorite way of celebrating, but I may not like the consequences. I don't want to have to live with regrets.
10. Getting drunk or high is one way to let my wife know how mad I am, but why should I hurt myself just to get back at her?

## 4

### Step Four: Getting in the Habit

As you start changing your drinking, you may find that your old thoughts work against you, giving you "permission" to make high-risk choices when you are tempted.

You might start thinking things like, "I bet I can handle drugs now," or "I don't think my problem with alcohol was so big after all."

You can fight back with new thoughts that take some of the power away from your Top Ten by balancing them out with the cold, hard facts. Having these two kinds of thoughts is like the story of the wolves. Which one will you feed? Now let's make our own Top Ten Things I Say to Myself When I Want to Make High-Risk Choices and Action Plan.



## My Top Ten List and Action Plan

1. What I say to myself when I want to make high-risk choices

The grain of truth \_\_\_\_\_

Balancing thought \_\_\_\_\_

2. What I say to myself when I want to make high-risk choices

The grain of truth \_\_\_\_\_

Balancing thought \_\_\_\_\_

3. What I say to myself when I want to make high-risk choices

The grain of truth \_\_\_\_\_

Balancing thought \_\_\_\_\_

4. What I say to myself when I want to make high-risk choices

The grain of truth \_\_\_\_\_

Balancing thought \_\_\_\_\_



5. What I say to myself when I want to make high-risk choices

The grain of truth \_\_\_\_\_

Balancing thought \_\_\_\_\_

6. What I say to myself when I want to make high-risk choices

The grain of truth \_\_\_\_\_

Balancing thought \_\_\_\_\_

7. What I say to myself when I want to make high-risk choices

The grain of truth \_\_\_\_\_

Balancing thought \_\_\_\_\_

8. What I say to myself when I want to make high-risk choices

The grain of truth \_\_\_\_\_

Balancing thought \_\_\_\_\_

9. What I say to myself when I want to make high-risk choices

The grain of truth \_\_\_\_\_

Balancing thought \_\_\_\_\_





10. What I say to myself when I want to make high-risk choices

The grain of truth \_\_\_\_\_

Balancing thought \_\_\_\_\_

1 CATCH YOURSELF COMING UP WITH A REASON TO DRINK OR USE.

2 FIND THE GRAIN OF TRUTH.

3 GIVE YOURSELF A BALANCING THOUGHT.

**How can I get in the habit of “hearing myself” when I am giving myself permission to use and then give myself a balancing statement? Brainstorm a list of things you can do to start using this every day.**

4 GETTING IN THE HABIT.

**Steps I can take to get in the habit of using balancing thoughts.**

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## A PRIME THOUGHT ON FEAR

Have you ever seen a rabbit freeze on the road when a car is coming? Fear can make us freeze. What might Rosanne Cash have meant when she said the key to change is "to let go" of fear? The opposite of letting go would be to hold on. Sometimes we hold on to our fear like it will protect us. Neither can we afford to wait for it to go away. It may never go away by itself and if we wait we may never take action.

Letting go does not mean we are not afraid. It means we no longer let it hold us back. Think of the fear as a big weight we let go of and just move. The weight is still there, we just are not holding on anymore. Think of someone trying to jump off a high porch or diving board but holding on to a rail. Only by letting go can he/she move forward.



**"The key to change...is to let go of fear."  
Rosanne Cash**

**What fear is holding you back? What can you do to let go of it?**

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“

*Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible  
objections must first be overcome.*

”

*~ Samuel Johnson ~*



## Listening for the Wolf

We have all been tempted to make high-risk choices when we did not intend to. We may have been thinking about our values in life and did not want to jeopardize the things that matter so much to us. But, then the feelings of “wanting” took over and even though we were trying not to make high-risk choices, we found ourselves doing the same old things again. We may wonder, “Why do I keep doing this?”

Temptations to make high-risk choices never completely go away. However, we can learn to minimize the number of temptations and minimize the craving.

Craving can be quite uncomfortable. When craving happens, it may be difficult to think of anything other than high-risk choices. Sometimes cravings happen because of an obvious cue. For example, seeing an old friend may bring back memories of the use. Other times craving starts and it may be hard to determine why. It may be due to something much less obvious like a feeling or the time of day.

This activity will assist you in recognizing specific “triggers” for those strong feelings of wanting to make high-risk choices. During treatment, you will develop tools for managing these feelings and reducing them over time.

### Points to Remember

**C**  
**R**  
**A**  
**V**  
**I**  
**N**  
**G**

- Craving happens naturally because of past high-risk choices. It is not caused by a lack of motivation, poor willpower, a character flaw, or a failure in your treatment.
- Craving is both psychological and physical. It is in our minds, brains, and bodies.
- Craving is not withdrawal.
- No one has ever died from craving, but many people have died from using or from withdrawal. Craving can be very uncomfortable, but it is not dangerous unless you act on it.
- Think of craving as the wolf that can destroy us. If we feed it by using, it will come back again and again. If we don't feed it, eventually it will go away.
- Though craving can be intense and frequent in the early weeks of change, it becomes milder as time passes, as long as you don't feed it by making high-risk choices.
- We may not be able to keep from craving, but we are always in charge of our response to it.



## Listening for the Wolf

List a few descriptions about how your body feels when you experience craving. Describe what the craving feels like when it is mild and what it feels like when the craving is strong. List descriptions for each part of the body listed and any other parts of the body where you experience craving.

What I feel in my...	When Craving is mild...	When Craving is strong...
Head		
Chest		
Stomach		
Hands		
Other		



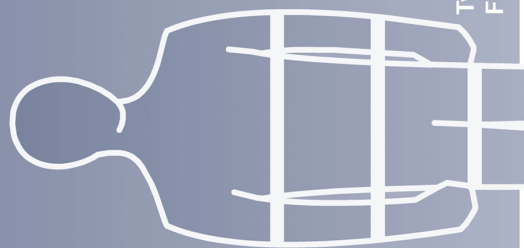
# My High-Risk Formula

Psychological Influences

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Social Influences

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



No Known  
Increased  
Risk Factor

One Risk  
Factor

Two Risk  
Factors

Body Brain Biology

\_\_\_\_ FAMILY HISTORY  
\_\_\_\_ HIGH TOLERANCE

My Low-Risk Guidelines

\_\_\_\_ IN AN HOUR  
\_\_\_\_ DAILY  
NO MORE THAN \_\_\_\_ ON ANY DAY

Outcome

=





# My Low-Risk Formula



No Known Increased Risk Factor

One Risk Factor

Two Risk Factors

Three Risk Factors

Psychological Influences

Social Influences

Body Brain Biology

\_\_\_ FAMILY HISTORY

\_\_\_ HIGH TOLERANCE

My Low-Risk Guidelines

\_\_\_ IN AN HOUR

\_\_\_ DAILY

NO MORE THAN \_\_\_ ON ANY DAY

= Outcome



## Keeping a Craving Log

Craving can be scary. Sometimes people say they had to use because they were craving. The use often leads to dread.

### **Another way to think of craving is that it is a natural response to our new decision.**

It is the alcohol or drugs trying to take charge again. If we feel fear at the idea of facing craving that is ok. We will have the tools we need to conquer it. We can conquer that fear and conquer the craving by using the tools we learn. Remember, there are two ways to deal with the discomfort of craving. The easiest way is just to give in to the craving and use alcohol or drugs. Nothing will relieve craving in the short term faster than using. But here is the problem: there is also nothing that increases temptation and craving more in the long run than using. What a bind that puts us in. Alcohol or drugs relieve the discomfort in the short term, but make it stronger and worse in the long run. After enough high-risk choices, people reach a place where once they start using, the craving quickly gets worse and using eases the discomfort for even a shorter time.

### **The other way to deal with craving is to acknowledge it, accept it, and use tools that help us get through it.**

In this way we bear the short-term discomfort for a better payoff. Most cravings do not last more than 10 to 30 minutes. If we find a way to get through those times, the craving eases. Then it becomes more manageable and returns less often. We are retraining our brains and our bodies not to expect use during those occasions. Over time the cravings get weaker. The temptations become only momentary and manageable.

One of the tools that may be helpful is keeping a craving log. Note the temptations you face and whether you experienced craving. If so, on a scale of 1-10 rate how strong the craving was (1 mild and 10 very strong). Also note what you did to deal with the craving and how well it worked. Then note what you learned from the experience.

“

*I learned courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.*

”

~ Nelson Mandela ~





## LIVING WITH TEMPTATION AND CRAVING

Date	What was the temptation?	Did I experience craving?	If yes, how strong was the craving (1-10)?	What did I do? What tool did I use or what other response did I make?	How strong was the craving after I did this (1-10)?	What did I learn? What can I take from this for the future?

The craving log is adapted from the work of Anna Rose Childress.

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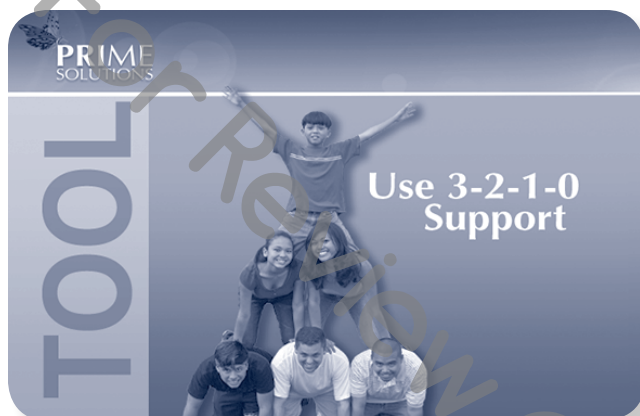


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The craving log is adapted from the work of Anna Rose Childress.

## Use 3-2-1-0 Support



Remember 0-1-2-3? The 0-1-2-3 concept can be used in another way as a guideline for social support. Now let's reverse it and think of it as 3-2-1-0.

Research suggests if we have at least 3 people who will support us in change, we are more likely to succeed. This means they will tell us we are doing something good by making change. We can talk to them when we need to boost our motivation.

3

**Do you know at least 3 people who will support you in your new choice? If so, write their names or initials in the blanks below. If not, how can you find this support?**

Consider:

Family \_\_\_\_\_

Friends \_\_\_\_\_

Faith groups \_\_\_\_\_

Co-workers (possibly including your boss) \_\_\_\_\_

Sports teams \_\_\_\_\_

Civic groups \_\_\_\_\_





2

**People who know at least 2 others who have succeeded in a similar change are also more likely to succeed themselves. Do you know at least 2 people who have succeeded in changing their alcohol or drug choices? If so, write their names or initials here.**

**What specifically could these people do to help you reach your goals?**

If you do not know at least 2 people who made changes with alcohol and drug choices, that alone might be a good reason to attend 12-Step meetings. Maybe you have attended a meeting and did not like the group feeling? Sometimes trying out another group leads to a completely different experience.

**If there are limited 12-Step or other support groups in your area, what other options do you have?**

1

**If you are in a 12-Step group, do you have a sponsor?**

If so, write your sponsor's name or initials here. If not, are there people in the 12-Step group who you would be willing to ask to sponsor you? Write their names or initials here.

**If you are not in a 12-Step group, do you have one person you can turn to who will be totally honest with you and be there for you? If so, are you in contact with that person? If not, where can you find this person?**





Sometimes craving is so intense you need to have support right now. Encouragement and recognition from others who have been there is often very useful and validating.

It is okay to ask for help or encouragement at those times. The zero is a simple reminder to never allow yourself to feel you must go through it alone. Help is available if you seek it.

**What can you do to reduce the number of times you need support and do not ask for it to zero?**

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Think of a situation coming up that could create temptation or craving. It could be a special event or a situation that happens regularly.

**Describe the situation.**

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**How could you use the 3-2-1-0 Support tool in that situation?**

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Sometimes temptation or craving seems to “come out of the blue” in ways you did not anticipate. Think of how you could be ready to use the 3-2-1-0 Support tool in those surprising situations—even though you cannot anticipate what the situation will be.

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## Change it or Leave it

“

*Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.*

”

~ Maria Robinson ~

When we see, smell, feel, or hear something that creates craving, it can feel like the craving is in control. We might start wanting to use so badly we can hardly think of anything else. But we are always in charge of our choices.

One way to take charge of your choices is to use the *Change It or Leave It* tool. This tool has several uses depending on the situation. Here are some ways people might use this tool:

- I change my thinking. Instead of thinking “I deserve to get high,” I think something like, “I deserve to have as few problems as possible. I don’t need to get high.”
- I change my situation. I do this by thinking ahead and realizing if I go to that place, the craving will be too strong. So I choose not to go.
- I change my perspective with a thought like, “My brain is different now, and I cannot do the things other people do.”
- I change the options. If people want to go to a bar, I suggest something like a ball game or restaurant.
- I change the subject. “If I get in this discussion, I will just end up angry. That makes me want to use, so I am not going to talk about it right now.”
- I change my location. If the desire to use is strong in one place, I leave and go somewhere else.

You could either think of this as “changing it” by changing where you decide to go, what you think, or what you decide to do. Or, you could think of it as “leaving it” as in leaving it alone, or leaving a high-risk situation. What are some other ways you can think of that people could change a situation or change their thinking about a situation?



## Change It or Leave It Practice

Let's practice applying this tool. Look at the list of situations we just brainstormed. Choose the ones that are most likely to happen to you and write them below:

List the *Change It* or *Leave It* skills you could use for these situations. Describe how each skill might help.

Sometimes temptation or craving can come "out of the blue" in ways you did not anticipate. Look again at the list we brainstormed and identify one craving that might not happen often. Think of how you could be ready to use the Change It or Leave It tool in those surprising situations.

Which *Change It* or *Leave It* responses could I use in these unexpected situations?

Examples:

I always drive myself to any type of gathering.

I stay close to the door so I can leave.

If I feel uncomfortable, I leave.

I always have my cell phone with numbers I can call.

“

*“When I am going to any type of gathering I always drive myself. And I always put myself close to the door. That way if I start feeling like I need to get out of there I just split.”*

”

~ A.J. ~



## Choose It Again



In Phases 3 and 4, repeated high-risk alcohol and drug use often becomes a habit. Even though the behavior is still a choice, it becomes so much a part of life that it seems automatic. In Phases 3 and 4, high-risk choices often occur almost subconsciously.

In Phase 3, this subconscious behavior is a powerful part of psychological dependence and the integration of high-risk choices into many areas of life. Using the Choose

It Again tool can help us to choose and maintain low-risk choices, including abstinence. This helps to remove both the high-risk choices and the psychological dependence from our lives.

By participating in treatment, you are choosing to break the pattern of automatic high-risk choices and work on establishing new choices as your pattern. But choosing is not a one time thing. It is something you do every time you have an opportunity to use. Success requires continuing to "choose it again." For now, be aware that when we encounter new or stressful situations, our first thought will likely be about using. This is an old habit at work at the neural network level. It is our brain following the quickest most well-established path. It is also why it is important to build a new habit. We do this by reminding ourselves each time, we are choosing.

### Choose it Again Practice

To explore reasons why we would choose to make changes in our lives, let's recall some of the reasons we first wanted to change.

**List some examples of things you value that high-risk choices already have taken or risked.**

Think of relationships, money, self-respect, work, school, or family for example.

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**List examples of other things you value that you fear future high-risk choices could take away from you.**

Think of relationships, money, self-respect, work, school or family for example.

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The first two lists help us to see more clearly what high-risk choices can do to us. Now let's explore what low-risk choices can do for us.

**List some things that low-risk choices have given you, and things you believe will come to you if you choose low-risk over and over again.**

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We now have listed things we want to avoid and things we want to gain.

Reminding ourselves of what we risk and what we hope to gain will help us choose again and again to keep the things we really value in life.



Think of a situation coming up that could create temptation or craving. This could be a special event or a situation that happens regularly. Describe it below.

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State specifically how you will use the *Choose It Again* tool in this situation. What will you say to yourself or others to stand by your decision to change?

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Sometimes temptation or craving seems to come “out of the blue” in ways you did not expect. Think of how you could be ready to use the *Choose It Again* tool in those surprising situations—even though you cannot know what those situations might be.

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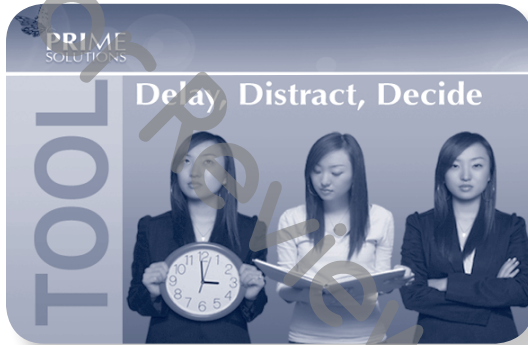
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## Delay, Distract, Decide



Have you ever made a spur-of-the-moment decision that you regretted? Most of us have. For some of us, it takes extra effort not to make impulsive decisions. If we are talking about buying a little something at the checkout aisle, it may not be a big deal. But when we are talking about alcohol and drug choices, it can literally become a life-and-death decision.

Being aware of craving can help us with our spur-of-the-moment alcohol and drug decisions. Once craving begins the desire to use can be very powerful. One way to deal with that power is by learning to delay the choice, distract our minds, and then decide

to use after the craving has died down.

Delaying gives us time to let the craving die down. It also gives us time to think what other tool might be helpful. Sometimes people say, "OK, I won't use for the next hour." Sometimes that is enough. Distracting our brains by doing other activities allows time for the cravings to lose their power. This is like saying to the craving, "I am in charge, and you are not going to make me decide right now." You keep the power and make a decision about use when the craving is no longer as strong.

The distraction puts distance between the craving and the decision. It also weakens the craving. Even during craving we have the power to decide not to do anything right away, or to do something to distract us from the craving. By using this tool, you give yourself prime conditions to make a decision that will protect what you truly value. The choice is always yours, and you do not have to act immediately just because the craving pressures you to choose right now.

Who has the power, the craving or me? I do!

### Delay, Distract, Decide Practice

CONSIDER: Committing now to delay deciding to use can help you delay when the craving actually begins. Are you willing to make a commitment to delay the decision to use when craving hits?

Circle one:

**Yes, I am ready to try the delay tool.**

**No, I'm not ready.**



**List the times you can predict when delay will be useful for you. Look at your craving log. In the column on tools you have used, have you listed this tool?**

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There are many ways we can distract ourselves when temptation or craving begins. For example, one person carries a little crossword puzzle book and pencil to pull out when he needs distraction. Another person uses prayer. High-sensation seekers might play a stimulating video game, go for a run, or go for a motorcycle ride. Those in 12-Step groups often call their sponsors or attend online meetings.

**Think of ways you could plan for distraction in various settings and write them here.** Try to include some distractions that are inexpensive or free:

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Think of a situation coming up—either a special event or something that happens regularly—where you may experience temptation or craving. Use the questions below to describe the situation and specifically plan how you will use the **Delay, Distract, Decide** tool in that situation.

**Describe the situation:**

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**When you are experiencing temptation or craving, how long does it last?**

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**What can you do in that particular situation to distract yourself?**

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**How will you feel if you successfully delay and distract and end up deciding on low-risk choices? Write a word or phrase here:**

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Sometimes temptation or craving seems to “come out of the blue” in ways we did not expect. Think of how you could be ready to use the Delay, Distract, Decide tool in those surprising situations—even though you cannot know what the situation will be.

**Are you in a 12-Step group?**

**Ask your sponsor how he or she has used distraction to deal with craving, or ask if it can be the topic of a discussion meeting.**





## I am Powerful

“

*It seems to me that people have vast potential. Most people can do extraordinary things if they have the confidence or take the risks.*

”

~ Philip Adams ~



Throughout history, people have used imagination to accomplish big things. Before the pyramids were built, someone imagined it was possible. It may have seemed ridiculous to other people, but imagination was an important part of the success. In some cultures, people have been encouraged to imagine themselves as powerful beings in order to build their sense of confidence. Ancient people often imagined themselves as bears or quick and cunning tigers.

Today people might imagine themselves as professional athletes, rock stars, or business tycoons. It may seem silly, but everything we accomplish in life begins with our ability to imagine it first. When we imagine ourselves having great power, we often feel more powerful, at least for awhile. This can be particularly helpful at when we are facing big challenges and need emotional boosts.

**You have had the opportunity to spend some time applying the I Am Powerful tool. What did you learn?**

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Think of a situation that will be coming up that could create temptation or craving. It could be a special event or a situation that happens regularly. Describe the situation.

How could you use the *I am Powerful* tool in that situation?

Sometimes temptation or craving seems to “come out of the blue” in ways we did not expect. Think of a how you could be ready to use the *I am Powerful* tool in those surprising situations—even though you cannot know what the situation will be.



## A PRIME Thought on Seeing Possibility

“

*There is no passion to be found playing  
small - in settling for a life that is less  
than the one you are capable of living.*

”

~ Nelson Mandela ~

We cannot all be a Nelson Mandela. But there is something wonderful in each of us. When you think about your own life—your own future, your own possibilities—what excites you? What do you feel passionate about? What is worth living for? What is worth changing for? What is worth sacrificing something for?

**Imagine you are at the end of your life looking back. You are proud of yourself and the choices you have made in your life. Describe yourself.**

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*[Nelson Mandela was raised in poverty and oppression in South Africa. His activities to work for equality for his people led to imprisonment for 27 years. After his release he became the first black president of South Africa. Instead of retaliation, he embraced reconciliation as the route to healing his country.]*



## Never Again



Sometimes people are ready to make changes because they have experienced something so painful, so embarrassing or just so out of character with how they view themselves that they never want to repeat those feelings again. Whenever they feel the wolf awaken and craving starts, they can help put it back to sleep by vividly remembering their worst moments.

Think of a situation that will be coming up or a situation that happens regularly—that could create temptation or craving.

**Describe the situation and specifically how you will use the *Never Again* tool in that situation.**

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**Sometimes temptation or craving seems to “come out of the blue” in ways we did not anticipate. Think of a how you could be ready to use the *Never Again* tool in those surprising situations—even though you cannot anticipate what the situation will be.**

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A water glass, half full of gin, sits on a rickety table. A dead fly lies still, floating on the surface of the gin. The air in the cheap hotel room refuses to stir, even with the window open. The temperature is 100 degrees. An expired calendar hangs askew on soiled wallpaper.

A man in sweaty underwear is asleep on a cot. Soiled sheets partially cover the spotted gray mattress. Two busy houseflies chase one another, oblivious to the scene. The man is Redcliff "Red" Banks, a once respected banker in our town, now down to his last nickel. He has not committed a crime, but he has been imprisoned by the most baffling and treacherous enemy of his life: alcohol. Red subsists 24 hours at a time, in and out of mean hotels. He is ignored by most people and avoids friends and acquaintances, living in full-time ignominy.

In a drunken haze, he stretches an unsteady hand to get his gin from the bedside table. He doesn't see the little corpse floating on the surface of the gin in the glass. He lifts the glass to his mouth and drinks. Then he feels the unfamiliar, lifeless insect on his tongue. He stops himself from swallowing it and, with loud, guttural disgust, spits it out.

It is a sobering event. Despite his condition, Red is shocked. This is a feeling he will never forget. He makes up his mind never to let himself forget it.

Even years later, Red uses his memory of this event to prevent anyone or anything from seducing him to drink.

From *Never Swallow a Dead Fly* by Roque Fajardo

## NEVER SWALLOW A DEAD FLY

*How to stop the  
craving after you quit*

**ROQUE FAJARDO**

*Author of  
Helping Your Alcoholic  
before He or She Hits Bottom*





## Imagine Success



Almost all successful athletes use one particular skill to improve their performances. They imagine themselves succeeding over and over again; making the big plays, doing difficult moves, evading the opposition, and winning. Other professions use this skill too. Actors, performers, pilots, artists, and musicians all use imagery to succeed.

Visualization is more than positive thinking, though that helps. Research finds that when we visualize doing something in detail we actually train our brains to succeed. When athletes imagine themselves making moves, they elicit activity in the parts of the brain associated with those physical actions. Their brains hardly know the difference between imagining certain actions and taking those actions.

When craving starts, visualization can help you as well. If you have mentally rehearsed actions to offset the craving, you are much more likely to actually do what you have imagined yourself doing. By creating a mental image of the action you will take at that time, your mind uses that action as a response to the craving.

**Think of a situation that will be coming up that could create temptation or craving. This could be a special event or a situation that happens regularly. Describe the situation.**

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“

*The power of imagination makes us infinite.*

”

~ John Muir ~



**Now apply the *Imagine Success* tool.**

See the event clearly in your mind. What time of day is it? What is the setting? Who is there? What are the sounds and smells? Picture yourself in that setting and then see yourself taking action to maintain your new choices. See yourself succeeding at making change happen in that situation. If you get stuck, back up and ask yourself what you could have done differently. Keep doing this until you can practice a way to succeed in that setting. This could include the decision not to go into the setting at all. Whatever it takes, mentally rehearse your success.

Turn to another person and describe the situation and your plan to help you succeed in that situation.

**Write down what you learned from applying this tool or from sharing the experience with someone else.**

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**Sometimes temptation or craving seems to “come out of the blue” in ways you did not expect. Think of how you could be ready to use the *Imagine Success* tool in those surprising situations—even though you cannot know what the situation will be.**

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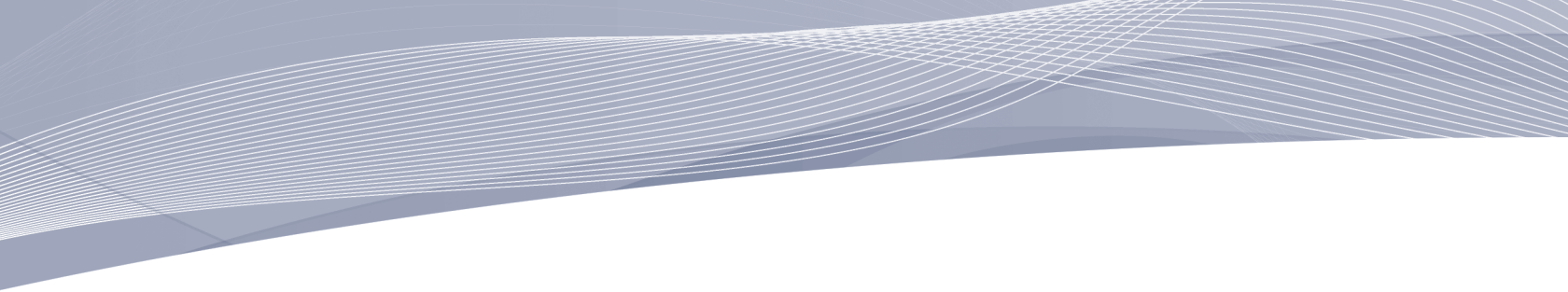


[illegible]

Your letter does not have to be a certain length and spelling and grammar do not matter. You will not have to share your letter. Just think about your values and write it from your heart.

Only. Not to be copied





For Review Only. Not to be copied



## Reward Myself



“  
*Happiness is not achieved by the conscious pursuit of happiness; it is generally the by-product of other activities.*  
”

~ Aldous Huxley ~

While we may not normally think about training ourselves to do things over and over, when we reward ourselves we are doing exactly that. And without realizing it, many of us have done that with alcohol or a drug as it acts in our brains.

For years we may have said things to ourselves like, “It’s been a tough week. I deserve to drink or to smoke some pot to relax” or “I did great! I deserve a party with a line or two or a few drinks.” When we use alcohol or drugs for our reward, our brains come to expect them every time it is ready for a reward. It is worth asking, “Am I training my brain in the way I want it to work?”

To succeed in making change, it is helpful to find new ways to reward ourselves when we accomplish our goals. This retrains our brains to expect different rewards. Rewarding ourselves for a job well done is a powerful way we motivate ourselves to keep succeeding. Rewarding ourselves for successful change also helps us deal with any temptation to go back to our old ways.

Small, immediate rewards are often more powerful than one bigger long-term reward, so on occasions when we succeed, we might buy something we really want, give ourselves time for a hobby, eat a food we especially like, think nice thoughts about ourselves, imagine a brighter future, look for beauty, or call some friends to talk about what we accomplished. The list of ways we reward ourselves is almost endless. We are, in fact, wired for pleasure, and we can use our natural wiring to motivate ourselves to keep on succeeding.

“  
*The highest reward for a person's toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it.*  
”

~ John Ruskin ~





## Reward Myself Practice

There are many different kinds of reward.

### FEELINGS

**How will you feel when you succeed in following your new choice?**

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### FEELINGS OF OTHERS

**How will the people closest to you or those you respect the most, feel about you when you succeed in making your new choice?**

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### FINANCIAL REWARD

Calculate how much money you have spent in an average week of making high-risk choices.

**Enter that amount here**      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If you set aside that much money each week, you can experience the weekly pleasure of watching the fund grow and plan for an event or purchase that will be rewarding for you.

*"When I changed my alcohol and drug use it was like getting a raise!"*



**How will you reward yourself or someone close to you with this money or maybe pay off debt?**

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Make a list of situations where you have used high-risk alcohol or drug choices as some kind of a reward – either to relax, celebrate, or deal with feelings. This would include times you told yourself things like, “I deserve this,” “I am going to treat myself,” “I’ve had a tough day and need to relax,” or anything similar. This activity helps us become aware of the many ways and times we have used high-risk alcohol or drug choices as rewards so we can then come up with alternatives for the future.

**What I have done in the past**

To relax \_\_\_\_\_

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To celebrate \_\_\_\_\_

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To deal with stress \_\_\_\_\_

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To stop worrying \_\_\_\_\_

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**What I will do instead**

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Think of a situation coming up soon that could create temptation or craving for you. It may be a special event or a situation that happens regularly. Describe the situation.

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When you succeed in making low-risk choices in that situation write down how you will reward yourself within a day of that success.

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Sometimes temptation or craving seems to “come out of the blue” in ways you did not expect. Think of a how you could use the *Reward Myself* tool in those surprising situations—even though you cannot know now what they will be.

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## See • Feel • Think • Do

Succeeding at change may mean finding new ways to live with temptation and craving and building new ways to respond to old situations. "See • Feel • Think • Do" is a four-part tool that can help you succeed.



### "SEE"

The more clearly you can see the events that create temptation or craving, the more prepared you can be to manage them.

You have been keeping a craving log to track and explore your temptations and cravings.

Review your craving log with a partner.

**What are the top five situations, events, or people that create temptation for you?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Are there different people, places, and things that trigger mild and strong cravings?**

If so, circle those that create the strong cravings in the list above. These may be the ones you choose to avoid most—especially as you begin to make change. In some cases you may be able to avoid certain situations such as if your spouse makes high-risk choices. In those cases, you may need additional tools to help you manage temptation and craving.



Think about the tools we have already learned. Think of which ones can be used for each of the 5 items above and write the name of the tool beside it. (Depending on where you are in treatment, this might include things like, "Delay, Distract, Decide;" "Imagine Success;" "3-2-1-0 Support;" or any of the other Tools for Change.

**What is likely to happen this week that could create temptation for you? Which tools can help you?**

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**"FEEL"**

**What feelings trigger cravings for you? These are feeling cues.**

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**Are there different feelings that trigger mild and strong cravings?**

If so, in the list above, circle those feelings that create stronger cravings. You may want to give these your attention first.

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To break a cycle growing out of our feelings, we must be aware of the feelings. Then we are more likely and able to influence the feelings with conscious thought. Right now let's just practice getting in touch with the feelings.

Go back to the temptation and craving activity on page 62 and review what it feels like for you during craving. Is this still accurate? Make any changes that need to be made to bring it up to date.

Now think about a specific situation that is likely to create temptation or craving and complete the following sentences.

**When I think about giving into the temptation or craving and using I feel:**

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**When I think about facing that situation and not using I feel:**

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## **"THINK"**

Thinking about certain people, events or settings becomes "self talk." By making your self talk more conscious, you can begin to change it to support your new choice.

**Go back to your craving log on page 68 and choose a situation you when you experienced temptation or craving.**

Identify any "risky thinking" that you might do in this situation such as "It's been such a tough day, I can't believe I can't have a drink," or "This sucks, not using is so boring". Write down those risky thoughts here.

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**Create a new or "protecting thinking" phrase that will support your decision to change.**

Consider phrases like "There is no situation so bad that starting to drink won't make it worse." "I can stand not drinking." "I don't like it but I can stand it." Maybe it is not fair that I can't drink like other people any longer, but life is not fair." "I don't have to drink right now."

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## **“DO”**

Using the Think tool allows you to do something different to support your new choice. Maybe your old way to respond to anger was to make high-risk choices.

### **What will be your new response?**

I will: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Look back at the situation just above where you listed some examples of protective thinking. What is a new action you can take around that event that will help you stick with your decision to change?**

Examples might include, “I will avoid the situation” or “When I start getting angry, I’ll call someone or take a walk. Write below a new action you can take in the situation you have identified or something you’ve used recently that has worked.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you that you can see-feel-think-do new ways in typical situations that will create craving or temptation?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No confidence					Very Confident				

**If you did not choose a 1 or 2, explain why you have more confidence than a 1 or 2. In other words, explain why you chose a higher number.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Stay on Message



There are several ways that we might feel some degree of suffering when people are trying to get us to go back to our old choices. People we once got high with might try to make us feel silly or weak. (That might make them more comfortable.) Or they might play to our fear of being left out and that fear can create some degree of suffering. But there is a payoff to staying with our choice. When people try to tempt us, we can succeed in staying with our new choice by using the "Stay on Message" tool. What does that mean? It means not letting other people make our decision for us.

It means staying with our new choice no matter what they say.

Think about a successful politician or someone else who has to deal with reporters. Sometimes, reporters try to get the politician to give more information, or ask leading questions to get the "sound bite" they want. A successful politician has learned to "stay on message" and say only things that will help achieve the goal. Those who succeed in tough interviews know the messages they want to give, and stick with those messages, no matter how much the interviewer tries to distract them.

We can use the same tool when our temptation to use comes from another person. We can succeed by knowing the message we want to give about our low-risk choice and staying on message no matter how people tempt us to do something else.



## Stay on Message - Activities

### Defining My Message

Write your change goal and think of it as “your message.” By repeatedly affirming our goals to ourselves, we develop a message we give to ourselves and can give to others when necessary. We can think of this as our personal “motto.” Write your personal motto here.

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### SKILLS FOR STAYING ON MESSAGE

Although it may be rare, somebody may actively try to sabotage your change process for reasons of his or her own. Imagine you are being pressured or even ridiculed for wanting to make low-risk choices.

#### **What could you say to defuse the situation and still maintain your own change process?**

For this one you don’t have to be polite necessarily, just come up with something that works without causing a fight. Write it down here.

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Others might mean well but, due to a lack of understanding, they try to get you to make a high-risk choice. Now it is time to be polite.





**What could you say to, "Turn Down a Drink/Drug Down Without Turning a Friend Off"? Write them down here.**

## **GETTING REAL**

**Think of a situation coming up soon that could create temptation or craving. This could be a special event or a situation that happens regularly. Describe the situation.**

**Imagine things people might say in that situation to get you to use. State specifically how you will use the Stay on Message tool to avoid or cope in that situation.**



[illegible]

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# Rewired for Pleasure

## Let's Brainstorm

Think of things you know people do for fun that do not involve high-risk alcohol and drug choices. At this point, don't concern yourself with whether you would or could do these things, just think about what is possible.

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## Scoring Your Sensation Seeking

Write your Zuckerman Sensation Seeking score here. \_\_\_\_\_

Next, compare the score you wrote down with the scale below. Circle the level on the scale that matches your score. No score is good or bad. It simply gives us information about ourselves that we can use for planning.

**0 - 27% = Very Low**  
**28 - 41% = Low**  
**42 - 70% = Average**  
**71 - 84% = High**  
**85 - 100 = Very High**

### Consider:

#### A High or Very High Score:

You are more likely to feel a need for new experiences or stimulation. You may also find yourself more easily bored. Think about trying some new things. You may find group activities with lots of interaction more enjoyable.

#### An Average Score:

You enjoy some new things, but don't want to be too stimulated. Try for a mix of the new and the familiar.

#### A Low or Very Low Score:

You may prefer things that are more familiar and calming. Keep this in mind as you plan below.



## Planning for Pleasure

1. **What are some things you currently do for fun or relaxation that do not involve high-risk alcohol or drug choices? Write them here.**

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**Are any of these things likely to set off a craving for high-risk choices?** For example, can you go to the stadium to watch a ball game without drinking or to a concert without smoking marijuana? Circle the rewarding things you do currently that are unlikely to create a desire for alcohol or drugs.

2. **Think of things you did in the past that you thought were fun, relaxing, or rewarding, but did not involve high-risk alcohol or drug choices.** These may include things you did even as a teenager or a child. Write them down. These can include board games, sports, hobbies like cooking, painting or yoga, activities such as movie-going, hiking, prayer, meditation, reading, or yoga. (Remember: If you have recently stopped making high-risk choices, your brain may not let you “feel” the idea of these things as fun just yet. Write them down anyway.)

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**Look at the things you have written down. Circle two or three things that you would be willing to try again.**





**3. Are there things you would like to do, but have not done, that might be rewarding and do not involve high-risk alcohol or drug choices?**

For now, don't worry about whether you can do them, just write a list of things you have thought about trying. Some people identify things like inline skating, skiing, going back to school, camping, or quilting. Write your ideas here.

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**4. Now go back to the brainstorming list and see if there are things you had not considered before, that you think you would like to do. Write your ideas here.**

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**5. Are there any steps you need to take to be able to do the things you have identified above?**

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Now you have:

- considered your Sensation Seeking Score,
- looked at current things you do for pleasure,
- recalled things you used to do for pleasure and,
- listed some new things you want to try doing.



**Go back over your lists and select two or three things you have not been doing recently but are willing to try in the near future.** These are things that do not involve high-risk alcohol or drug choices and are unlikely to create a craving for high-risk choices.

**Fill in the blank with activities you've picked and set a date when you will try it.**

Activity	Date

**Are there other activities that you would like to try, but that will take more planning or preparation?** For example, you might want to travel, but don't have the money right now. You might want to go back to school, but your current schedule doesn't allow for it. These might be more long-term activities, something you will do in a month or a year from now. Write down two activities and what you need to do to get ready for them.

Activity	Preparation



## Turning long term goals into short-term pleasures

Think back to something you really enjoyed, or that meant a lot to you, but it took a long time to accomplish. Do you remember the pleasure you had planning for it, thinking about, even daydreaming about how much you would enjoy it?

Sometimes there are things we would like to do, but there are roadblocks. For example, our schedules may prevent us, or we do not have enough money right now. When we face those times we can either choose to feel badly about it, or we can experience the pleasure of planning and anticipation.

We can also experience the pleasure of overcoming the roadblocks. In measuring "success" in planning for pleasures, it is important not only to find new short-term pleasures, but to view moving toward other things we want day by day as being rewarding as well.

Think of something you would like to do in the future that is not possible right now. Then make a plan for how you can make it possible. Identify specific steps you can take and what you will use as your measures of success along the way.

For example, maybe you want to go on a vacation. A first step might be to identify where you want to go and learn about that place. Just that step could be a lot of fun. Then determine what it will cost for travel, meals, and lodging. Again this step by itself can be pleasurable. We then would need to figure out how to save the money. One strategy might be to take the money you would have spent on alcohol or drugs and put it in a savings account. Another might be to get a part-time job and save money earned from that job. While this might not be as much fun as the planning, there can be a lot of pleasure in meeting "landmarks" such as saving 25% or 50% of the money needed.



## Turning Long Term Goals into Short-term Pleasures

1. Think of one long term goal you would like to work on and write it here.

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2. Identify and write in the steps you will take to reach that goal.

After you write a small short-term step, write how you think you will feel after it is finished -- proud, relieved, excited, hopeful or some other feeling.

**Short-term Step**

**Feeling**

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## Farewell to a Friend



Change is a part of life and most changes involve some kind of loss. Even when we are convinced we are doing the right thing, we grieve the loss of some things we leave behind. This does not mean we are weak, bad or even undecided about the change we are making; it just means we are human.

In Phase 3 we saw how people develop a relationship with alcohol or their preferred drug. They treat it like a friend or lover. But the

relationship with a substance may have hurt friendships, family relationships, and teamwork on the job. We have decided that it is time to let go of an old friend—our high-risk choices. That is a great decision, but it can spark some grief that can make us want to go back to those choices. Let's explore whether we are experiencing that grief and, if so, what we can do about it.

### FAREWELL TO A FRIEND - ACTIVITIES

#### 1. Write down here the things you believe you might lose as a result of changing to low-risk choices.

You may or may not actually lose these things, but you may believe or fear you are going to lose them. Think not only of people who may not accept your change, but also activities you enjoy but need to give up.

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Sometimes, when want to change something that has been important in our lives, it can help to go through some activity that helps us to "let go" and say goodbye. That is one reason that all cultures have some kind of funeral ritual. Write a "good-bye" letter to your high-risk choices and break off the relationship.





Include these three things:

- Honest feelings you may have about breaking off the relationship with your substance (refer to the scale above that you just did);
- Why you need to break off this relationship;
- The positive things you will get for ending the relationship.

## 2. As you think about changing from high-risk to low-risk choices, how do you feel?

Some people, especially those who have experienced loss of control, may not miss the compulsion to use and the problems it caused. Others may feel that life is going to be awful without high-risk choices. There is no right or wrong here, just be honest in your feelings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Relieved - glad they are gone					Sad			Awful	



## Beyond Myself

Treatment helps us change. We discover our potential and ability to change our life for the better. Spirituality goes a step farther and helps us transcend or “get out” of ourselves so that we see how to better live with others. Spirituality helps us gain self-knowledge, and ways to use that knowledge to see beyond ourselves, enjoy fulfilling life goals, and help ourselves and others suffer less.

In this session we will explore some spiritual values that people from many religions, and even those who profess no religion at all, have found helpful in rebalancing their lives. As they discover, or get in touch with, their spirituality, they reconnect with some important personal experiences. They often find that life begins to offer more reward. No person perfectly lives out these values; we are only human. Yet when we give them our attention, we become more aware of when we use or fail to use them.

The values are presented here in no particular order. You may choose to explore the ones that work for you first. Later, you may find others becoming more important. There are some questions following each section as an opportunity to reflect on the issue just presented, so we are calling them “reflections.” There are no right or wrong answers to the reflections. They should be used as opportunities to express your thoughts and feelings. Your responses will help you know where you are currently in dealing with spiritual issues.

If these reflections raise issues about changing your drinking or drug use, or your time in treatment, you can request to meet with your counselor individually. If you belong to a faith community, you may also want to discuss your issues with people there. Remember, these values are not intended to replace any person’s existing faith or religious doctrine. Rather, these are concepts embraced by all religions. Explore them in the context of your own change process and life.

**{ Honesty - seeing and portraying one’s self as one who deals fairly, sincerely, and truthfully with others. }**



**What are my thoughts on “a little pain now to avoid greater pain later?” Does this make sense to me?**

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“

*Honesty is the first chapter of the book of wisdom.*

”

*~ Thomas Jefferson ~*

**Have I been less than honest in the past, to myself or others, about my drinking or drug use? If so, what problems or losses has this created for me?**

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*“I have ‘cash register’ honesty,” she told the group. “If I found your wallet on the street, you would get it back with all of the money and credit cards. But I am starting to realize how dishonest I am about my drinking and my drug use. When craving starts, I sneak off. I hide drinks because I don’t want others to know how much I’m drinking. When I was in high school, I lied to my parents about getting stoned and about where I was and who I was with. I got mad when they checked up on me, but I had taught them not to trust me. I think of myself as an honest person – I’ll tell you exactly what I think – but I’m seeing now how my craving and using makes me dishonest. I hate that.”*



**Are there relationships I have damaged through a lack of honesty? If so, what can I do to repair those relationships? Do I honestly want to repair them?**

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**“**  
*The only way most people recognize their limits is by trespassing on them.*  
**”**

~ Tom Morris ~

Remember that virtues are all about balance. We do not have to tell a friend we think their haircut is ugly—even if we think it is—unless we know they really want an honest opinion. Mostly we work to be honest with ourselves. This helps us know better what to tell others and when.

**What have I learned while thinking about honesty with myself and others?**

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**What, if anything, do I want to do about it?**

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*A person in treatment once said, “I used to think of myself as either a worm or wonder. Today, I just let myself be human. Sometimes I get it right, sometimes I make mistakes. Life goes on.”*



**{** *Humility - giving respect; accepting help; not unfairly glorifying one's own self; giving credit where credit is due* **}**

**What have I learned about myself in considering humility?**

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**How does humility relate to changing my alcohol or drug choices?**

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**12-Step groups use the Serenity Prayer. How might that help develop humility?**

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**Does my own level of humility make it easier or harder for me to change? Why?**

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**What do I need to accept to become more humble?**

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{ Faith - To believe and trust in something beyond one's self. }

**What do I believe in or trust that guides me in making decisions?**

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**Who or what do I trust to inspire and guide me in my change process?**

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**Has this opportunity to explore the issue of faith created any new insights? If so, write them here:**

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“

*Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase.*

”

~ Martin Luther King Jr. ~



*"I came here because I was desperate. I didn't come here looking for spirituality," the woman said softly. "And when I first heard it, I thought, 'I'll just be polite and sit here quietly. I don't need any of that.' But now this is the most important part of my recovery." With a small grin, she added, "After all, my best thinking got me addicted."*

**How might these insights, if any, help in your change process?**

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**It is an old question, but a good one: "What would you do if you knew you could not fail?"**

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**Look back at a time when you were courageous, but had faith. Perhaps you took a stand even if you were afraid and did what you felt had to be done. How can that experience help you now?**

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“

*If you can't have faith in what is held up to you for faith, you must find things to believe in yourself, for a life without faith in something is too narrow a space to live.*

”

~ George Witherbury ~



**{** *Courage - acting despite fear of personal loss or injury; facing difficulties, danger, or adversity with confidence or resolution* **}**

**We can sometimes find courage in support from others. Who will stand by you, no matter what?**

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**Write about a time in your past when it seemed some power beyond yourself gave you resources. Perhaps you experienced some unexplainable insights, wisdom, opportunities, or the right person crossing your path at the right time? How can these events give you faith and courage for today? You have done timelines of your past and future. Consider doing a "faith" timeline here of past events when you felt supported in ways you can't explain.**

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**Are you ready to make a decision to act with courage, even when you are afraid in the future? If so, write in your commitment to act with courage here:**

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*"I knew I had to quit," said the man, "but I just couldn't think of life without the drinking and drugs and partying. They were so much a part of my life. It wasn't just that I didn't know what I would do if I quit drinking; it was really that I didn't know who I would be. Would people like me? Would I lose all of my friends? It was scary."*

“

*Courage is doing what you're afraid to do.  
There can be no courage unless you're  
scared.*

”

*~ Eddie Rickenbacker ~*



**{ Surrender – letting go of willfulness and the need to control everything; opening up to possibilities beyond ourselves }**

**What particular people, places, or situations are you powerless to control?**

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**List any realities in your life you have not accepted.**

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**How does it feel to think about letting go of those things you noted in the last two questions? How does it feel to accept that you cannot control them and giving up attempts to try?**

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**What could help you accept those realities and move ahead?**

**Who do you think might be "out there" to help you successfully change your life?**

*A man whose son, Tim, was born with Down's Syndrome had really struggled with accepting his new son's condition. He finally shared with a group, "I had to let go of the son I expected before I could love the son I had. I had all these dreams of what my life as a father was going to be like. I had to surrender those dreams to become the father Tim needed me to be."*

*"*

*Some think it's holding on that makes one strong; sometimes it's letting go.*

*"*

*~ Sylvia Robinson ~*



**{ Ego – An exaggerated sense of self-importance;  
or appropriate pride in oneself }**

**Describe a time when you could have tried to force things to be your way but instead found it pleasant to let someone else “have their day.”**

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**Describe a person you admire who you see as strong, but who does not seem to need to do things their own way.**

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*“I always had to do things my way. If people tried to stop me I got really angry. But one day I asked myself what right I had to be stomping around in people’s lives like that. It is funny, but when I gave up having to do everything my way, I got happier. It is so opposite of what I expected. Today I feel less important, but somehow feel like I have won everything.”*

“

*“Strike me down and I will become more powerful  
than you can possibly imagine.”*

”

*~ Obe Wan Kenobi, Star Wars ~*



## Notes

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