

GA WELCOMES YOU... A NEW MEMBER



WELCOME TO GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS! Most people come here for the first time because they have hit the bottom of the misery barrel – COMPULSIVE GAMBLING. They come expecting miracles. That's the one thing GA cannot perform for you. You, and only you, can perform the miracle - but GA can show you the way.

- **GA** can help you to stop gambling by showing you how others have stopped.
- **GA** can help you become a better person by following the GA recovery program.
- **GA** can help you regain self-respect and responsibility to yourself and others.
- **GA** is not a lending institution, but GA can show you how to get out of the financial mess you are in - if you are in one.

You received a booklet as a new member of GA. We ask you not only to read it, but also to study it, memorize it, and start on the steps to your recovery. Right at this moment, step one is the most important step to you - admitting to yourself that you are a compulsive gambler. If you will not admit it to anyone else, accept the fact yourself. Sometimes that is the most important step of all. Some cannot or will not face that fact. Yet - if you are here, we must assume you are a compulsive gambler.

HONESTY is the key to the GA program - honesty to yourself, to your family, to your friends, and to the other GA members. Throughout your gambling career you may have

cheated, you may have stolen, you may have committed crimes, but - most certainly - you have lied! GA cannot make you honest. But we can help you to become so.

We of GA want the problem gambler to stop gambling - that is our aim. But, we will not punish you if you do not stop. All we ask you to do is not become discouraged. Come back to us even if you do gamble again. We have had members attending meetings for months on end until they finally quit. Some quit from their very first meeting. Some never quit and live with their misery for the rest of their lives. Only you can decide which category you want to be in.

Again - we welcome you to this meeting and sincerely hope you will derive some help and understanding from the people who speak here tonight. Most of us have equaled your misery at some time in our lives. Quite a few will have exceeded your misery beyond anything you could possibly imagine. Listen and you will find that you're really not unique and not alone. You are now, possibly for the first time, among people who understand your problem. We have been there and we would like to be your friends.

We can help you - will you help yourself?

One Day At A Time

Each day is a new beginning, another chance to learn more about ourselves,

To care more about others, to laugh more than we did,

To accomplish more than we thought we could,

To be more than we thought we could,

To be more than we were before.

TO THE NEW GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS MEMBER

Welcome to your first Gamblers Anonymous meeting! Gamblers Anonymous members, trusted servants, sponsors and advisors will counsel you and help guide you back to a normal life. Look around at the many faces, listen to the therapy and you will see that this program does work. All that is required on your part is a desire to stop gambling.

Most new members find themselves with a multitude of problems. Gamblers Anonymous can offer sound advice in dealing with these pressures, such as:

Legal Difficulties - *Bad checks, fraudulent loans, etc.*

Many members have been in this position and resolved these problems through the Gamblers Anonymous program.

Financial Difficulties - *Rent in arrears, past due loans, personal obligations, etc.*

GA is essentially a self-help program; consequently, experience has shown that direct financial aid does not work to your benefit. The Trusted Servants and Advisors are good financial counselors and are usually part of the Pressure Group Committee. They will show you how it is possible to pay your obligations in a way that will permit you to live without having unbearable pressure.

Employment Difficulties - *Out of work, about to be fired, or your present job is unbearable.*

Based upon their own personal experience, other members can counsel you to help yourself in this direction.

Family Difficulties

Whether you are married, separated or single, GA members and their spouses (in GAM-ANON) can help tremendously. They will be happy to explain the wonderful success of our program to your family. The program almost always works, although it takes some time; so be patient. The

best factor, as the weeks go by, is your own sincerity and dedication to work things out. Ask about GAM-ANON meetings.

HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS WHICH WE HAVE FOUND HELPFUL:

- Attend at least one meeting per week and as many other meetings as possible.
- Telephone other members as often as possible between members.
- Don't tempt or test yourself. Don't associate with acquaintances who gamble. Don't go in or near gambling establishments. Don't gamble for anything; this includes buying raffle or lottery tickets, flipping a coin, or entering the office sports pool.
- Live the Gamblers Anonymous program **one day at a time**: don't try to tackle all your problems at once.
- Read the Recovery and Unity steps often and continually review the Twenty Questions. Follow the steps in your daily affairs. If you have any questions, ask them of your Trusted Servants and Sponsors. These steps are the basis for the entire Gamblers Anonymous program and practicing them is the key to your growth.
- **Be Patient.** The days and weeks will pass soon enough and as you continue to attend meetings and abstain from gambling, your recovery will really accelerate.

Serenity Prayer

God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the Courage to change the things I can,
and the Wisdom to know the difference

WHY ARE GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS MEMBERS ANONYMOUS?

Anonymity has great practical value in maintaining unity within our fellowship. Through its practice at the level of press, radio, films, and television we have eliminated the possibility of fame and recognition being given to the individual member. Hence, we have not been faced with any great internal struggles for power and prestige, which would prove highly detrimental to our essential unity.

Anonymity also has great value in attracting new members who initially might feel there is a stigma attached to the problem. Therefore, we guarantee the newcomer as much anonymity as

they choose.

More importantly, we are beginning to realize that anonymity has tremendous spiritual significance. It is a powerful reminder that we need always place principles before personalities.

Our survival as individuals demands that we renounce personal glorification. The Gamblers Anonymous movement advocates, and encourages its members to practice true humility. It is through greater humility that we will be able to live in peace and security for all the years to come.

AS IT IS USED IN GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS, WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE WORD SPIRITUAL?

Simply stated, the word can be said to describe that characteristic of the human mind marked by the highest and finest qualities such as generosity, honesty, tolerance and humility. Inasmuch as the Gamblers Anonymous fellowship advocates acceptance of these principles as a way of life, it can thus be said that Gamblers Anonymous is a spiritual fellowship.

TIPS - HOW TO HURT YOURSELF AND THE FELLOWSHIP:

- Do not attend meetings. If you go, be late.
- If the weather does not suit you, do not think of going to the meeting.
- If you do attend a meeting, find fault with the trusted servants and members.
- Never accept an office. After all, it is easier to criticize than to do something.
- Get sore if you are not appointed to a committee. Should you be appointed to a committee, do not attend any of the meetings of that committee.
- If asked to express your thoughts on some matter, tell the chairperson that you have nothing to say. After the meeting tell everyone how it should have been done.
- Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary. When others roll up their sleeves and unselfishly use their ability to help matters along, holler that the group is being run by a clique.
- Do not be sociable either within or outside the meeting room.
- Hold back on your donations, or make none at all.
- Accept a job, then do not follow through and complete it - then stick someone else with it.
- Make no effort to get new members or to help new members with phone calls etc.

TO THE NEW MEMBER - DO YOU NEED A SPONSOR?

After you have been in GA awhile and have heard someone say sponsors are vital, you're probably wondering what they're talking about. You probably also heard it's a simple program but a hard one. So, will a sponsor complicate or simplify your program? Let's take it one step at a time.

What does a sponsor do?

A sponsor encourages you and counsels you in your recovery. A sponsor can help you solve your problems, deal with your emotions, get to meetings and work the steps.

Who picks the sponsor and how is the relationship arranged?

You do the picking based on several important points: You may be concerned about age, type of gambling they did, how much clean time they have and perhaps most important, that you can communicate with them.

Sponsors fall into two groups, nice guys/gals and the other kind. Both can do the job, each their own way. Your job is to pick one you can trust, as you will be confiding matters that you may not wish to disclose in meetings. You will bring your sponsor all problems large and small, to the best of your ability.

They won't give you all the answers but will offer alternatives enabling you to make good decisions.

What if they turn you down? This could happen if he/she has too many new people at the present time, feel that they could not do a good job for you or they feel they couldn't give you the time you need. If you get turned down, it's not personal --- Ask someone else.

Pick a person that can help you and not just because they are nice!!!

ANOTHER CHANCE

Fellow gambler, take my hand:
I'm your friend, I understand.
I've known your guilt, your shame, remorse:
I've borne the burden of your cross.
I found a friend who offered ease:
He suffered, too with this disease.
Although he had no magic cure,
He showed me how we could endure.
We talked together side by side:
We spoke of things we had to hide.
We told of sleepless nights and debts:
Of broken homes and lies and threats.
And so my weary gambler friend:
Please take this hand that I extend.
Take one more chance on something new:
Another gambler helping you.