



The Road to Relapse

Rapha's Twelve-Step Program/or Overcoming Chemical Dependency

For each of these false beliefs, there is a corresponding truth from God's Word, the Scriptures:

SATAN'S LIE	GOD'S TRUTH
Your worth = Your performance plus others' opinions	Your worth = What God says about you
I must meet certain standards to feel good about myself. If I don't... (Fear of Failure)	Justification (Rom. 3:19-25; 2 Cor. 5:21): I am completely forgiven and fully pleasing to God.
I must be approved (accepted) by certain others to feel good about myself. If I'm not approved ... (Fear of Rejection)	Reconciliation (Col. 1:19-22): I am totally accepted (by God).
Those who fail are unworthy of love and deserve to be blamed and condemned. (Fear of Punishment/Punishing Others)	Propitiation (1 John 4:9-11): I am deeply loved (by God).
I am what I am; I cannot change: I am hopeless. (Shame)	Regeneration (2 Cor. 5:17): I am absolutely complete (in Christ).

Renewing our perception of God, ourselves, and others by changing our belief system will take time, study, and experience. It has taken years to develop patterns of behavior that reflect a false belief system. It will take time to change. We will continue to examine these beliefs throughout this workbook. The process of learning to apply God's truth to our lives may be painful at times, but it is also rich, rewarding, and exciting!



The Road to Relapse

Before moving to step 3, it is important to learn something about relapse. Relapse is returning to alcohol or drugs after a period of abstinence. Relapse is a possibility for anyone in recovery, regardless of how long he or she has been clean or sober. The reason this is true is because even though one has stopped drinking or using, he or she has not stopped having an addictive personality. When that addictive personality begins to control the recovering person's life, he or she is said to be a "dry drunk," one who has sobriety, but no serenity. In fact, the recovering person may exhibit all of the behaviors associated with his or her using or drinking days-without the presence of chemical substances.

■ Warning Signals

Like recovery, relapse is a process comprised of behaviors, attitudes, feelings, and thoughts which culminate in drinking or using. One may fall into a relapse over a period of hours, days, weeks, or even months.

Warning signals to alert you to a possible relapse are:

- Feeling uneasy, afraid, and anxious, sometimes about staying clean or sober. This begins to increase as "serenity" decreases.
- Ignoring feelings of fear and anxiety, and refusing to talk about them with others.
- Having a low tolerance for frustration.
- Becoming defiant, so that rebelliousness begins to replace what has been love and acceptance. Anger becomes one's ruling emotion.
- The "ISM" (I-self-me) attitude grows. Self-centered behavior begins to rule one's attitudes and feelings.
- Increasing dishonesty, whereby small lies begin to surface as deceptive thinking again takes over.
- Increased isolation and withdrawal characterized by missing groups and withdrawing from friends, family, and support.
- Exhibiting a critical, judgmental attitude, a behavior which is often a process of projection as the group member feels shame and guilt for his or her own negative behaviors.
- Overconfidence manifested by statements such as, "I'll never drink (or use) again," or by simply believing that one is the "exception" to all rules about recovery. He doesn't need to come to meetings anymore. She can handle going back to the old friends and places.
- Underconfidence about oneself manifested by self-derogatory remarks, overwhelming feelings of failure, a tendency to set oneself up for failure.



■ Special Stressors

In addition to these warning signals, it is important to be alert to certain times which can make one more vulnerable to relapse. Some of these include:

- Completing the first week of sobriety
- Completing the first twenty-one days of sobriety, and any anniversaries for sobriety thereafter, specifically: ninety days, six months, nine months, one year
- Holidays
- Personal anniversaries, birthdays, or other special days
- Experiencing "high" moods of exuberance, perhaps after receiving a raise, getting a job, getting engaged or married, etc. (Many people fail to realize that "high" moods are as stressful as low moods.)
- Becoming overly hungry, angry, lonely, or tired