

## Lesson 1

# DENIAL

**Principle 1:** Realize I'm not God. I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable.

*"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor." (Matthew 5:3)*

**Step 1:** We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable.

*"For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." (Romans 7:18)*

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## Think About It

Before we can take the first step of our recovery, we must first face and admit our denial. God tells us, *"You can't heal a wound by saying it's not there!" (Jeremiah 6:14, TLB)*. The acronym for DENIAL spells out what can happen if we do not face our denial.

### Disables our feelings

By repressing our feelings we freeze our emotions. Understanding and feeling our feelings is freedom.

*"They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of destructive habits — for we are slaves of anything that has conquered us." (2 Peter 2:19, GNT)*

### Energy lost

A side effect of our denial is anxiety. Anxiety causes us to waste precious energy running from our past and worrying about and dreading the future. It is only in the present, today, where positive change can occur.

*"He frees the prisoners . . . ; he lifts the burdens from those bent down beneath their loads." (Psalm 146:7 – 8, TLB)*

### Negates growth

We are "as sick as our secrets." We cannot grow in recovery until we are ready to step out of our denial into the truth.

*"They cried to the Lord in their troubles, and he rescued them! He led them from their darkness and shadow of death and snapped their chains." (Psalm 107:13 – 14, TLB)*

### Isolates us from God

God's light shines on the truth. Our denial keeps us in the dark.

*"God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." (1 John 1:5 – 7)*

## **Alienates us from our relationships**

Denial tells us we are getting away with it. We think no one knows — but they do.  
What is the answer?

*“Stop lying to each other; tell the truth, for we are parts of each other and when we lie to each other we are hurting ourselves.” (Ephesians 4:25, TLB)*

## **Lengthens the pain**

We have the false belief that denial protects us from our pain. In reality, denial allows our pain to fester and grow and turn into *shame* and *guilt*.

*God’s promise: “I will give you back your health again and heal your wounds.” (Jeremiah 30:17, TLB)*

Accept the first principle of recovery. Step out of your denial! Step into your Higher Power’s — Jesus Christ’s — unconditional love and grace!

## **Write About It**

1. What areas of your life do you have power (control) over? Be specific.
2. What areas of your life are out of control, unmanageable? Be specific.
3. How do you think taking this first step will help you?
4. As a child, what coping skills did you use to get attention or to protect yourself?
5. In your family of origin, what was the “family secret” that everyone was trying to protect?
6. How do you handle pain and disappointment?
7. How can you begin to address your denial?
8. In what areas of your life are you now beginning to face reality and break the effects of denial?
9. Are you starting to develop a support team? Are you asking for phone numbers in your meetings?

*List them here or on the inside back cover of this participant’s guide!*