

Lesson 2

POWERLESS

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)

Think About It

When we accept the first recovery principle and take that first step out of our denial and into reality, we see there are very few things that we really have control over. Once we admit that by ourselves we are powerless we can stop living with the following "serenity robbers," spelled out in the acrostic POWERLESS.

Pride

Ignorance + power + pride = a deadly mixture!

"Pride ends in a fall, while humility brings honor." (Proverbs 29:23, TLB)

Only ifs

Our "only ifs" in life keep us trapped in the fantasyland of rationalization!

"Whatever is covered up will be uncovered, and every secret will be made known. So then, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in broad daylight." (Luke 12:2 – 3, GNT)

Worry

Worrying is a form of not trusting God enough!

"So don't be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time." (Matthew 6:34, TLB)

Escape

By living in denial we may have escaped into a world of fantasy and unrealistic expectations of ourselves and others.

"For light is capable of showing up everything for what it really is. It is even possible for light to turn the thing it shines upon into light also." (Ephesians 5:13 – 14, PH)

Resentments

Resentments act like an emotional cancer if they are allowed to fester and grow.

"In your anger do not sin': Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold." (Ephesians 4:26 – 27)

Loneliness

Loneliness is a choice. In recovery and in Christ, you never have to walk alone.

“Continue to love each other with true brotherly love. Don’t forget to be kind to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!” (Hebrews 13:1 – 2, TLB)

Emptiness

You know that empty feeling deep inside. The cold wind of hopelessness blows right through it.

Jesus said, “My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.” (John 10:10, TLB)

Selfishness

We often pray: “Our Father which art in heaven; give me, give me, give me.”

“Whoever clings to his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall save it.” (Luke 17:33, TLB)

Separation

Some people talk about finding God — as if He could ever get lost!

“For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can’t, and life can’t. The angels won’t, and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God’s love away. . . . Nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love God demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ when he died for us.” (Romans 8:38 – 39, TLB)

Congratulations! In your admission of your powerlessness you have begun the journey of recovery that will allow you to accept the true and only Higher Power’s — Jesus Christ’s — healing, love, and forgiveness.

At this stage in your recovery, you need to stop doing two things:

1. Stop Denying the Pain

You are ready to take your first step in recovery when your pain is greater than your fear.

“Pity me, O Lord, for I am weak. Heal me, for my body is sick, and I am upset and disturbed. My mind is filled with apprehension and with gloom.” (Psalm 6:2 – 3, TLB)

2. Stop Playing God

You are unable to do for yourself what you need God to do for you. You are either going to serve God or yourself. You can’t serve both.

“You cannot be a slave of two masters; you will hate one and love the other; you will be loyal to one and despise the other.” (Matthew 6:24, GNT)

In addition to stopping certain behaviors, you need to start doing two things:

1. Start Admitting Your Powerlessness

As you work the first principle, you will see that by yourself you do not have the power to change your hurts, hang-ups, and habits.

“Jesus . . . said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” (Matthew 19:26)

2. Start Admitting That Your Life Has Become Unmanageable

You can finally start admitting that some or all areas of your life are out of your control to change.

“Problems far too big for me to solve are piled higher than my head. Meanwhile my sins, too many to count, have all caught up with me and I am ashamed to look up.” (Psalm 40:12, TLB).

Principle 1 Prayer

Dear God, Your Word tells me that I can't heal my hurts, hangups, and habits by just saying that they are not there. Help me! Parts of my life, or all of my life, are out of control. I now know that I cannot "fix" myself. It seems the harder that I try to do the right thing the more I struggle. Lord, I want to step out of my denial into the truth. I pray for You to show me the way. In Your Son's name I pray, Amen.

Note: Before you begin "Write About It," read the "Prayer for Serenity" and read the Principle 1 verses.

Write About It

1. List some of the ways that your pride has stopped you from asking for and getting the help you need to overcome your hurts, hang-ups, and habits.

2. What in your past has caused you to have the "if onlys"?

"If only" I had stopped _____ years ago.

"If only" _____ hadn't left me.

3. Instead of worrying about things that we cannot control, we need to focus on what God can do in our lives. What are you worrying about? Why?

4. In what ways have you tried to escape your past pain? Be specific.

5. How has holding on to your anger and your resentments affected you?

6. Do you believe that loneliness is a choice? Why or why not? How has your denial isolated you from your important relationships?

7. Describe the emptiness you feel and some new ways you are finding to fill it?

8. Selfishness is at the heart of most problems between people. In what areas of your life have you been selfish?

9. Separation from God can feel very real, but it is never permanent. What can you do to get closer to God?