When you first enter recovery, you just want to stop the behavior. Whether it is shooting up in an alleyway, drinking until you pass out or picking up prostitutes on the corner addiction changes your behavior. If you could just get the right help, you could stop, and you could have your life back.

True recovery goes far beyond simply stopping the unwanted behavior. It is an entire lifestyle change that includes changing your thoughts, feelings and behaviors, then stepping into a life that you may have never fully experienced before.

Recovery is the journey of a lifetime and with every good journey, knowing where you are headed can be exciting, it can give you hope and keep you focused on the big picture on the rough days. This e-book is meant to be a guide throughout your journey.

Safe travels,
Kathy Kinghorn, LCSW, CSAT-Supervisor
Let’s get real about the journey. Recovery is hard, it takes a lot of effort.
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1 | How this book came to be
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HOW THIS BOOK CAME TO BE

Several years ago, I thought it might be nice to drive to a conference in Phoenix from Salt Lake instead of taking a flight. I have family in Las Vegas, so an overnight stop there made the trip seem doable. The trip from Salt Lake went quite smoothly. It is beautiful country, and there are good roads and easy on-and-off gas stations and rest stops. So, as I started out for Phoenix, I felt optimistic about the trip.

I wasn’t too far into the drive when the speed limit dropped, the roads were curvy and the traffic started to back up. This wasn’t a momentary situation. This scenario went on for many, many miles. I found that gas stations and rest stops were few and far between. The worst part was that it was a one-lane road due to construction for most of the way.

I became increasingly irritated. I questioned my decision to drive; I was bugged by every driver in front of me, my playlist of music was even starting to become annoying. As I turned another curve, a sign on the side of the road caught my attention. It was a simple message, “Passing lane ahead.”

I instantly felt relief. In fact, the feeling of relief and calm was such a noticeable change that I began to ponder on whether the Department of Transportation hired psychologists to create those signs!
It really struck me that simply knowing relief was up ahead, I felt calmer and more positive.

So, I began to think about the road of recovery that my clients were on. Had I shown them clearly where the road began and where the journey ended? Had I given them signs along the way about the difficult curves and inclines in the road? Did I give them the clear guidance they needed?

By the time I arrived in Phoenix, I had evaluated the traits an addict needs to focus on early in recovery so that they can obtain the traits of addicts who sustain long-term recovery.

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It is a long road to sustained long-term recovery.
Protection

I don’t believe we protect what we don’t love, and I don’t believe we love what we don’t protect. As your addiction begins to put bigger and bigger wedges in your relationship, it is natural for your spouse to ask the question, “Do you love me?” You won’t know the answer to that question early in recovery and sometimes that not knowing can lead to the wrong conclusion.

To find the answer you will need to first begin to be protective. You can start protecting her in the smallest of ways. When you hear her arrive home, go out and help her carry in things. Open doors for her. Give her your coat when it’s cold.

Pay attention as you do these small acts to the emotions and thoughts that come up. For example, early on you might find that you have a resentful feeling with the thought, “She didn’t even notice that I worked an hour late and now I have to help her carry in the groceries.” Talk to your sponsor or a group member about this.
Three ways I am going to start protecting my spouse are:

1. ______________________________________________________________________

2. ______________________________________________________________________

3. ______________________________________________________________________

Honesty

Integrity is earned by an undetermined amount of honest acts over time. Consistently being honest in every situation over time is the only way to stay on the road to recovery. Active addicts lie about anything and everything. Addicts appear to be honest only when it allows them privilege that liars don’t have.

For example, your wife might ask you why you had to work so late. You might lie and say that your unreasonable boss gave you ridiculous deadlines that you had to stay and meet. Your wife may feel sorry for you and do the household chores, like getting the kids’ homework done, putting them into bed, making dinner or cleaning up dinner all while you lay on the couch. It’s hard to give up that unearned rest on the couch, so you don’t tell her the truth, which is that you and your buddy went to a local bar for a couple of hours.
If you truly want recovery, you will have to earn it by being honest. A spouse deserves to know who she is married to. Talk to a trained therapist about how to participate in a full formal disclosure.

**Curiosity**

Another tragedy of addiction is that you have lost your ability to feel empathy toward your spouse. Your spouse can be crying because she has found a chat conversation on a shared iPad between you and someone else. Instead of considering how much pain this discovery has caused her, you defend yourself by rationalizing, “It’s not like I was ever going to meet up with her.” or minimizing, “I was just bored, it was no big deal.”

To regain feelings of empathy you will first need to get curious about your spouse. Ask meaningful questions and listen to your spouse’s answers. Ask questions like, “What was the best part of your day?,” “What made you laugh today?” or “Where would you go if money was no object?” Get curious about what her world looks like.

**Healthy Boundaries**

As an addict you will have incredibly poor boundaries. What is meant by that, is that your ability to not act on your impulses will be so low that even with a very tight budget, you will spend money on your addiction rather than on ensuring that the needs of your family are met. You may say inappropriate comments to co-workers. Instead of inattentive drivers being frustrating you may get into road rage situations.

Your relationship boundaries will be too disconnected. Instead of having an occasional day where you aren’t quite present with your spouse, you consistently have too much distance between her world and yours. Consider starting with making boundaries in the following three areas of your life: financial, physical and
emotional. Again, notice what feelings and thoughts come up for you as you try to keep these boundaries. Share these boundaries with your spouse and your sponsor.

An example of a physical boundary might be, I will commit to taking a 15-minute walk outside every day.

**PHYSICALLY I WILL:**

_____________________________________________________

An example of an emotional boundary is, I will share an unexpressed emotion I had each day with my spouse.

**EMOTIONALLY I WILL:**

_____________________________________________________

An example of a financial boundary is, I will review our monthly income and expenses and create a weekly budget.

**FINANCIALLY I WILL:**

_____________________________________________________
Staying in Reality

Addicts live in fantasy. Here are some typical fantasies of active addicts:

- My behavior isn’t affecting anyone else.
- My spouse will see that I have had a hard day and leave me alone.
- The kids are really going to appreciate that I took them to Disneyland and they will behave perfectly.
- My boss is going to see the extra effort that I did on that project and thank me in front of everybody.

The problem with fantasy is that we can’t learn in fantasy. We only learn when we stay in reality. That is why when I see an active addict at their initial intake, I see that their emotional IQ is very, very low. What kind of learning are you missing out on? The important kind of learning - relationships. It takes a lot of work to be able to create and keep healthy relationships.

Active addicts don’t like hard work, when things get hard they go back to their addiction. As time goes on, smaller and smaller relationship difficulties become increasingly harder to bear and the addiction gets increasingly easier to go toward.
List your top three fantasies:

1. ____________________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________________________________

Now, take a minute and go back and cross out each fantasy and write your reality underneath it.

Take a minute and transfer those 3 realities to your phone. Each time your mind starts to go back to the fantasy, open your phone and read the reality statement you wrote.

THE TRANSFORMATION TO BEING

When your first begin recovery, you don’t know if you are going to succeed. In fact, you may be starting recovery for the 38th time as you read this. No matter how many times people tell you that you can succeed or share other success stories with you, you just can’t quite yet believe that you will. Another way to look at that is to say, “I don’t know who I am. I’m not sure yet.” So, you have to “do” a lot of recovery work until it becomes clear who you are going to “be”.
Take a minute and look at the words in the left-hand column.

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All of those words are about doing things. Now, take a look at the words in the right-hand column.

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All of those words are about who you can be.
Before you know who you can be, you have to do! Think about Michael Phelps, the Olympic Gold Medalist, who won multiple gold medals across the span of his Olympic career. He didn’t know when he swam that first lap if he was going to be a gold medalist. He did know if he kept doing a lot of training and competitions over time he would put himself in the best position to become a world-renowned champion.

TRAVELER TIPS

2. Understand that the road is long. Don’t expect these changes to occur quickly. However, do look for incremental progress. For example, as you practice being honest you will find yourself lying. Correct lies quickly, apologize and move forward.

3. Don’t get caught up with the wrong questions. “Why am I an addict?” is not a good early recovery question. You have to get further from the want of your addiction, to discover the why of your addiction.

4. Write about your journey. Talk about your journey. Draw about your journey. These activities will allow you to retrace your steps one day and see how far you have progressed.
“Remember, relief is ahead, like the passing lane on the road."