

How It Works

Many Twelve Step meetings include a reading of "How It Works," which is taken from Chapter 5 of Alcoholics Anonymous (the Big Book.) The principles in that chapter still work, making a powerful statement about what is required for recovery. What follows is a translation of "How It Works" for compulsive self-sabotagers.

1. We admitted we were powerless over self-sabotage – that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to Our God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have Our God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Our God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of our God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to misery addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Many of us exclaimed, "What an order! I can't go through with it!" Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything close to perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints.

The point is that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our description of the Self-Sabotager and our personal adventures before and after starting recovery make clear three pertinent ideas;

1. That we were addicted to self-sabotage and avoidance and could not manage our own lives.
2. That probably no human power could have relieved our self-sabotage addiction.
3. That a Higher Power could and would relieve us of this addiction if that Power were sought.