

WELCOME TO SMART

You are here to learn how to change some things in your life.

To do that you must first identify and recognize a particular problem or set of problems that you may have. And sometimes this is not obvious. But anything that causes you emotional distress such as anxiety, worry, frustration or fear are signals of where to look for the source of the difficulty.

After targeting the problem it is necessary to learn about and understand some well-known processes and stages of change that can be used. There are many tried and proven modern techniques available that offer excellent prospects of success. You may be thinking: My problems are unique. No one would understand. I've tried to change and nothing has ever worked. I am stuck with this mess. This is just not true. And you are probably wondering: What will I have to do to overcome these problems? Where do I start? How do I start?

OK here's the first step. If the following fits you, you are starting out well. Ask yourself this question: "Have I found it hard to resist the temptation to continue doing something that I know is against my better judgment?" In other words do you have two minds about the "bad habit" involved? Sometimes you plunge in and couldn't care less, but other times you have misgivings and regrets?

If the answer is yes, then with some good work, doing things that you can easily learn, you can reverse the circumstances. And you will become a happier and more competent person who has learned how to take control of your thoughts and behavior and who has gained a lot in emotional maturity!

Most people who come to a self-help group have this necessary first condition. It is called ambivalence. However most are also very apprehensive about changing much. They have been in the habit of giving in to cravings, and have no idea what they can effectively do to change all that, so they think nothing will really work. But that's not necessarily true. Thousands of people every year recover completely from addictions and get on with their lives.

In SMART Recovery we understand that all undesirable compulsions and even addictions are learned behaviors. Some people may have been exposed to a more influencing environment, and some people may have a more susceptible nature. But the good news is that any undesirable habits can be understood and relearned, and replaced with new practices and even a new lifestyle.

You may be wondering, how did I get into this situation? First of all, do not think that there is something wrong with you. It is perfectly natural to seek pleasure and join in peer activities. It is sensible and healthy thinking to seek escape or relief from pain or distress.

It's really very easy to fall into habits when pleasure or relief are involved. But these things can sometimes lead to a situation that has a downside that outweighs the original intent. Looking back, maybe you took too easy a road to find that pleasure and avoid that discomfort.

And it took a quite a long time for the habit or habits to get well seated. So the process of change will take some time and effort. The road you are on now could possibly lead to wonderful new growth and strength in your life, or the one you have been on could possibly lead to a spiral down to deeper problems. If you make up your mind to go the high road, (no pun intended), you are in the right place at the right time.

In SMART Recovery, we often start out with a risk-reward analysis of one's situation regarding any particular issue. Relax! Everyone has some problem areas, often many. By doing this, usually with help, you will begin to put your situation in perspective and see some of its realities down on paper in black and white. You will find your group mates nonjudgmental and helpful.

And soon you will find that in SMART Recovery we want you to understand about unconditional self-acceptance. Your total worth is not measurable. You are too complex and variable to be judged as a whole person. But if the measure of your worth is permitted as with the concept of trying to have a high "self-esteem" then your self image can also be damaged greatly when a particular "ungood" act or behavior is equated to your whole worth. This is a subject that will take some study, but for now remember that your mistakes or self-perceived shortcomings do not diminish your real worth.

As you saw at the top of this introduction, the idea here is to learn about changing things in your life. The first thing is understanding the problem and how problems work in your life. And then you learn the ropes of how to challenge stuff in your own head and get some better things working. And in the third big area, to realize that you are worth it. Perhaps you have failed to really appreciate how valuable and worthwhile you are.

Well, that's the picture: We are a completely volunteer and non-profit organization of professionals and non-professionals who feel a great need in our society for the benefits of modern scientific methods to be applied to addiction. This means helping you through change from a destructive habit to a more rewarding and fulfilling life. Once again, welcome to SMART Recovery.

