

LivingIntegrated®

FIFTEEN PRACTICES FOR LIVING THE LIFE YOU WANT

WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE?

Go to <https://youtu.be/1TXvc9rOG7Y> for the companion video for this conclusion to Fifteen Practices.

*Congratulations on getting to this final portion of the Fifteen Practices!
Well done.*

In working through these Practices, you've done some hard work in facing your reality, learning about addiction and honestly confronting how compulsive behavior has been creating destructive consequences in your life.

You've taken steps to move out of isolation and assemble support. You've begun to put into practice a program of recovery work such as the Twelve Steps. You've now got in place safeguards, new boundaries and patterns for taking better care of yourself.

You've identified the things that can derail your wellbeing and take you backwards. You've learned about counseling and professional help, taken to heart the importance of your spirituality, and given attention to the importance of prayer, mindfulness and meditation.

You also now have a template for an ongoing life of recovery resourcing to help you stay on the path of healing and integration.

None of this has been easy.

If you've become deeply compulsive in your behaviors, you may have experienced some feelings of withdrawal like restlessness, difficulty sleeping and irritability. These reactions are normal. They're part of the process of resetting your brain and your life.

You will continue to encounter some interior resistance to making changes to your life. This, too, is part of the process.

WHAT IF YOU'RE STILL HAVING TROUBLE? _____

It may be that in spite of the work you've done, it doesn't seem to be enough. You find you still have difficulty living a different way, that sobriety is still eluding you.

Remember the Fifteen Practices are meant to be a start (or restart) to help you form your foundation for recovery. For many of us, more has been needed.

There are several reasons that may keep us from living the life of recovery we want. These are important to think about. Carefully consider the following and be honest with yourself.

We need a deeper program. One cause of continuing to struggle is that we need to do a more thorough housecleaning, a deeper process of coming to terms with our powerlessness and unmanageability and facing everything we've engaged in sexually.

We need more structure. Another cause of continued struggle is we need a much more structured life of recovery. Many of us have lived lives where we cultivated a mentality of cutting corners to the point we're totally unaware when we're doing it. We can aid the recovery our lives by using more structure.

Having said that, it's absolutely essential that *our motive for recovery is to live a life of love and response to love*. We must avoid being motivated by shame, fear or control.

While these Practices are a foundation for sound recovery patterns, there is material available for developing more structured recovery. I suggest you use Dr. Patrick Carnes' workbooks *A Gentle Path through the Twelve Steps* or *Facing the Shadows*, followed by the *Recovery Zone*. These are terrific resources, but you'll get the most out of them if you use them with a recovery partner, therapist or group.

We need therapy or treatment. Perhaps our recovery needs a deeper level of therapy and/or treatment. For many of us, this is the case. Do not be afraid of pursuing competent therapy.

You've started something good. Keep on. If the right counseling, intensive, or treatment is what you need to be free of compulsive sexual behaviors, please do whatever it takes to use these valuable tools. You will be very grateful you did.

We need to address unresolved trauma. Finally, it may be that there is untreated or unresolved trauma in our lives, most likely in our earlier years. We may not be fully aware of it or even able to face it. Here it's *absolutely essential* that we find the right therapeutic help.

Not all counselors are trained in dealing with trauma. You need to find a therapist who is certified in one or more of the wonderful emerging therapies for trauma, such as EMDR, Somatic Engineering, Brainspotting or others.

THE QUEST IS INTEGRATING YOUR LIFE

Maybe you've noticed I talk a lot about integration. What do I mean by that?

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I think an integrated life is one in which we are learning to weave together our thoughts, feelings and actions with our principles and spirituality in an increasingly cohesive way so that when we look back we can feel good about the life we have lived.

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Carefully review the things you've written down as you've worked through these Practices. Where are the areas you'll want to come back and review? Make plans in your schedule to do that. What are your next steps to take?

Who is in your supportive community? What are you doing and what will you continue to do to grow your relationship with those folks and involve others in your recovery as well as theirs?

Pay attention to your spiritual life. Make time for reading, reflection and journaling, prayer, mindfulness and meditation.

And, continually look for ways to pass on to others the experiences of hope and healing that are becoming part of your life. This is essential! We have to give away what we're getting if we hope to keep it. This is a recovery principle and also a spiritual principle.

You must be careful about your anonymity, I understand that. But there are ways to send people links to this website (LivingIntegrated) or recommend *Ashamed No More* and other books you're discovering, and still maintain enough distance. Find ways to pass on what you've been given.

NOW, TWO THINGS WE'D LIKE YOU TO DO TO HELP US

That leads me to two things we'd like to ask you to help us with.

First, we'd really like your feedback. Have these Practices been helpful? Write us and tell us, please. Your input matters to us.

If there's something we could add, drop or change within the basic scope of this resource package, please let us know.

Write us with your feedback at connect@livingintegrated.org.

Second —and this is really important—please pass along to others the link to the LivingIntegrated website and resources.

It's important to share with others what you've found helpful. It's part of healthy recovery and healthy spirituality.

In this connection-oriented age there are many ways to pass along links and recommendations without disclosing too much about yourself.

We depend on relational networking to maximize our usefulness to others. Thank you!

You've begun a life-long pilgrimage. Commit to developing and protecting this new life.

May our Loving Creator be with you, guide you and bless you always.

