

A CHANCE FOR

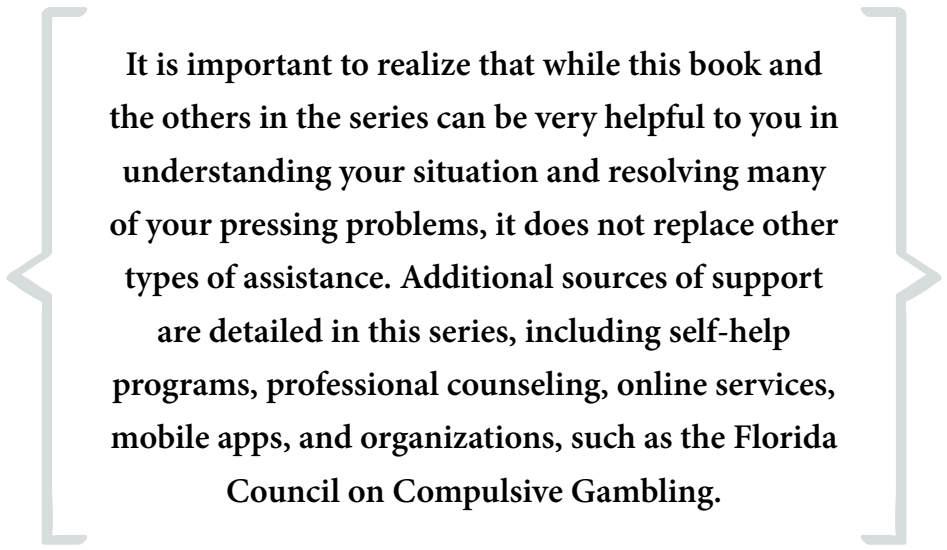
Change

Healing Your Way to a
New Beginning

FOR COMPULSIVE GAMBLERS



BOOK SEVEN



It is important to realize that while this book and the others in the series can be very helpful to you in understanding your situation and resolving many of your pressing problems, it does not replace other types of assistance. Additional sources of support are detailed in this series, including self-help programs, professional counseling, online services, mobile apps, and organizations, such as the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling.

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A CHANCE FOR
Change

Healing Your Way to a New Beginning



This book is the last book in a series of seven workbooks designed to aid in recovering from the adverse effects of problem and compulsive gambling.



The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG), established in 1988, is a non-profit educational and advocacy organization, under contract with Florida State government, dedicated to helping persons adversely affected by problem and compulsive gambling. The agency maintains a neutral stance on the issue of legalized gambling, while seeking to assist citizens in need of support. Primary responsibilities include:

- Operating the State's 24-hour confidential and multilingual toll-free Problem Gambling HelpLine, which offers supportive intervention, information, and referrals to self-help programs; professional treatment with certified providers; financial and legal services, online assistance, mobile apps, and more.
- Designing, implementing, and overseeing prevention, education, and outreach programs.
- Training mental health, medical and other health care professionals to assess and treat.
- Providing an Online Program for Problem Gamblers and Live Chat program.
- Sponsoring and performing research.
- Conducting education and/or responsible gambling training programs for government agencies, gambling operators, law enforcement authorities, academic and employee assistance organizations, and others.
- Implementing and overseeing gambling-specific outreach programs for impaired professionals; adolescents; military members, families and veterans; and seniors.
- Working with legal, law enforcement and judicial authorities on gambling-related cases.
- Offering a Speakers Bureau and a Peer Connect program.

The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling's development of *A Chance for Change* is the result of an identified need for alternate forms of education and assistance to those whose lives are negatively affected by a devastating gambling disorder (compulsive gambling).

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Introduction – A Review

If you are reading this book, the final one of the series, you have invested a lot of time, thought and emotional energy into learning how gambling has influenced all aspects of your life. You have looked inside yourself for the truth about your actions, your behaviors and your motivation for behaviors. You have practiced the skills of reflection, honest response and thoughtful consideration as they apply to change. You have learned what you can do to overcome feelings of **powerlessness**. Most importantly, you have learned how to plan for change and create opportunities for change to happen. You are now ready to review some of these skills and processes as you solidify your plan and begin the important and rewarding step of achieving your goals.

It is essential to realize that while this book and the others in the series can be very helpful to you in understanding your situation and resolving many pressing problems, they are not intended to replace other types of support. Additional sources of assistance detailed in this series include self-help programs, professional therapy, online services, mobile apps, and organizations, such as the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling.

As new words are introduced in the text, they will appear in **boldface type**. A *Glossary* at the end of the book has definitions of these words.



**Positive change
means you are
making progress
with different
issues in
your life.**

Examining Where You Started

In Book Six: *Rebuilding Your Life*, you began keeping a “One Day At A Time Checklist,” looking at the many areas of your life you are working, and noting your progress in each of these areas. If you glance back at some of your first entries, you will be able to see how far you have come. It is also a good time to review your answers to the exercises in each of the previous books.

It is important to note that positive change in this program is not measured by whether every aspect of your life has changed. What matters is that you feel you are making progress and developing better coping skills and methods for handling your own life regarding the various issues you are working on. Success varies from person to person. What is important to recognize is that you have changed or made progress, no matter how incremental, on these issues. Remember, small steps can result in significant change.

One of the most important aspects to creating change and staying on track is setting plans for your future. Your future will come whether you make plans or not. It can either happen to you, or you can make it happen. You can be in charge of your destiny by creating a plan and setting it in motion. The first step is to examine the comments you have written throughout this series to see what you are working toward and the progress you have made.

My Goals at this Point

In this section you are going to rank your goals for dealing with change in your life. Then, you will examine the most prominent goal and take a look at how you have progressed in that area. It is helpful to review the books in the series that pertain to each of the topics. It is also beneficial if you take your time completing each of the sections in this final book. Do not rush through this process. One of the skills emphasized in this series is the ability to reflect honestly.

As you begin to read through each of the items in the section on the next page, ask yourself two questions.

1. What does this statement or item mean to me?
2. How important is this item to me at this particular time?

Your answers to these questions will help you to rank order each of the following sets of goals. If the item has nothing to do with you, draw a line through the corresponding box. The most important goal to you will have the number 1, the next most important goal, the number 2 and so on.

Book One: Deciding to Change Rank Topics 1-7

- ___ Admitting you have a gambling problem
- ___ Choosing to take charge of your life
- ___ Willingness to do the hard work necessary to change
- ___ Recognizing what you can take charge of and what you can't
- ___ Being honest with yourself
- ___ Recognizing your own irrational thinking
- ___ Knowing the difference between perception and fact

Book Two: The Process of Change Rank Topics 1-8

- ___ Recognizing where you are right now
- ___ Addressing your physical health
- ___ Addressing your emotional health
- ___ Letting go of the masks you use
- ___ Knowing what type of gambler you are — action or escape
- ___ Reducing dependence on alcohol and/or drugs
- ___ Making a plan for change
- ___ Developing a support system

Book Three: Taking Steps to Change Rank Topics 1-12

- ___ Recognizing **triggers**
- ___ Making plans to avoid triggers
- ___ Communicating better with others
- ___ Monitoring yourself and staying on course

- ___ Reflecting on your life and how you want to live it
- ___ Developing new activities to replace gambling
- ___ Establishing new mindsets, including spirituality
- ___ Taking action regularly
- ___ Functioning well in your daily life
- ___ Using positive imaging
- ___ Maintaining a calm and clear head
- ___ Reducing destructive people and behaviors in your life

Book Four: Your Financial Status Rank Topics 1-8

- ___ Getting to the truth about your financial health
- ___ Assessing your financial status
- ___ Living within your means
- ___ Practicing steps for saving money
- ___ Turning financial management over to someone else
- ___ Establishing and living within a budget
- ___ Limiting your access to funds
- ___ Seeking financial counseling

Book Five: Your Legal Status Rank Topics 1-4

- ___ Identifying behavior that leads to legal problems
- ___ Protecting yourself
- ___ Avoiding criminal activity
- ___ Creating a plan to deal with legal problems

Book Six: Rebuilding Your Life Rank Topics 1-9

- ___ Reframing your thinking
- ___ Working to recapture your life
- ___ Finding the *real you*
- ___ Working on regaining trust
- ___ Making amends
- ___ Letting go of guilt and shame
- ___ Living with the burden of your past actions
- ___ Finding ways to repair relationships
- ___ Learning to enjoy life again

If you have other goals not covered in the topics listed, add them here:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Your Primary Goals

Now, for each category, find the goal that you ranked as number 1. Write that goal below. Then indicate how much progress you have made and what you can do to continue moving forward in this area. If you wish to work on more than one goal in each of the categories, you may use the additional worksheets in the back of this book to complete the exercise. In addition, you may find it useful to put a date beside the marks you make each time through. Then sometime later you might repeat the exercise in pencil or in a different color ink. Just because you have read through all of the books in this series does not mean that your work ends here. Recovery is a continuing process that can reward you for the rest of your life. Having a visual record of your thoughts and plans throughout your recovery can be motivating as you evaluate the progress you have made.

Number 1 Goal in Deciding to Change: _____

Progress you have made so far: _____

Actions you will take next: _____

Number 1 Goal in Your Process of Change: _____

continued on next page

Progress you have made so far: _____

Actions you will take next: _____

Number 1 Goal in Taking Steps to Change: _____

Progress you have made so far: _____

Actions you will take next: _____

Number 1 Goal in Your Financial Status: _____

Progress you have made so far: _____

Actions you will take next: _____

continued on next page

Number 1 Goal in Your Legal Status: _____

Progress you have made so far: _____

Actions you will take next: _____

Number 1 Goal in Rebuilding Your Life: _____

Progress you have made so far: _____

Actions you will take next: _____

Number 1 Goal for "Other": _____

Progress you have made so far: _____

continued on next page

Steps you will take next: _____

Most likely, by looking at each of your dominant goals as you just did, you can see that you have made some important progress toward taking charge of your life. As you move into your future, consider setting up plans, like you have practiced throughout the series, for the "steps you will take next."



Take a break — think about the following questions and write down your answers.

When you're ready, move on to the next section.

How does it feel to see the progress you've made so far? _____

What do you think might motivate you to continue the change process? _____

Regaining Balance

As you take charge of your life, you may be finding that it is difficult to know what balanced actually is. When you live a life where **irrational thinking** and distorted perceptions are part of everyday thoughts, it can be hard to recognize a **balanced life** when you see it. Many people think that lives filled with tension and crisis are typical and when these feelings or behaviors are missing, they mistake the calm of everyday living as boring. Some gamblers think that if they do not feel “excited,” then life is not fulfilling. Life can be fulfilling without excitement, and also, excitement can come from activities or aspects of your life other than gambling. Additionally, you may have become accustomed to a stressful, unbalanced life, filled with problems and crisis. If this type of frantic living appears balanced to you, it is possible that when you begin to experience real balance, as in a sense of peace and calm, you may feel out of sorts or as though something is missing. When you become comfortable with chaos, you may not like the feeling of a balanced life at first. Remember that your version of what is boring and what appears to be balanced may not be accurate, based upon the experiences you have had while gambling.

Don't be fooled into thinking that a life of daily stress, frustration and crisis was, or is, better for you. What you are doing is learning to enjoy new feelings — feelings you might not have



**A balanced life
is not a boring life.
It can be rich in
excitement and
fulfillment.**

experienced for a very long time. Order, peace, calm, reflection, and contentment will soon come to feel natural to you as you practice balance. And best of all, a life lived with balance is much better for your physical, emotional and spiritual health. A person at peace and in balance can make clear-headed decisions, can lead and create their destiny, and can attract others with similar qualities. Again, calm does not mean boring. It means a life free from chaos, a more peaceful and fulfilling life.

In Book Three: *Staying the Course*, you took a look at other activities that you could introduce into your life to take the place of gambling. These activities might already be helping you to move toward a more balanced life in the absence of gambling. Again, while gambling might provide you with a feeling of excitement or release from troubles in your daily life, your goals in this process are to find other ways to experience these same feelings or releases while building a better way of life filled with meaning.

All of the changes you are implementing in this series are leading you toward balancing work, family, social activities, fun, love, as well as your body, your emotions and your mind.

How can you tell if your life has lacked balance? Here are some potential signs. Put a check beside all that apply to you:

- ☐ You think more about gambling than anything else.
- ☐ You are not concerned with the needs of others, only your own.
- ☐ Your life revolves around situations involving gambling.
- ☐ You do not engage in a wide range of activities, but instead focus on just "getting by" until you can gamble again.
- ☐ You hide the truth about your life from family and friends.
- ☐ You have forgotten how to have fun without gambling.
- ☐ Your relationships with others lack depth.
- ☐ You practice elaborate deceptions to pretend that everything is all right. You deny there is a problem.
- ☐ You cannot handle the ups and downs of life easily.
- ☐ You don't talk about the real problems. Instead you pretend they don't exist. You focus on other issues, talking and getting upset about *them* instead.
- ☐ You engage in elaborate schemes to manage money and make ends meet.

If you checked more than two of these statements, your life may continue to be lacking in balance. Remember though, if you are actively working on a change program, such as the changes suggested in this series, you are probably in the process of correcting some of this imbalance right now. Keep going!

There may be specific instances in your life that can be related to some or all of these behaviors. For instance, maybe you hide the truth of your life from family and friends. Perhaps you find yourself always making excuses for your behavior and your whereabouts. This does not encourage balance and eventually you will start to feel detached from others, believing they do not understand you. You may know that you are not being yourself but might not know what to do about it. By positively working on a change program, you can help to modify this behavior.

As you work on developing balance and not slipping back into old ways, it is also important to consider where and how you spend your time. Take care that you do not put so much of your life into one area that you neglect other necessary aspects. A balanced life will be somewhat different for each person, but in general it is meaningful to divide your time among work, school, family, home, friends, self, recreation, relaxation, and intellectual stimulation in ways that satisfy, rather than stress you. An out of balance life leads to stress and frustration, which in turn, leads to relapse, which in turn, leads to life problems, which again leads to stress and frustration, and so on. It is a cycle that must be broken.

For the following exercise, consider that your time is represented by the number 100%. What percentage of your time each week is currently devoted to various parts of your life? Maybe 10% to friends, 20% to family and 70% to work or school? Does this seem balanced? Perhaps for you it feels good and is balanced. For someone else it might not be.

Step 1:

For each item listed, write down the % of your time spent each week. If the item is not relevant to your life — for instance if you are not in school — insert 0.

_____ % Family
_____ % Work
_____ % School
_____ % Home (maintaining)
_____ % Friends
_____ % Self
_____ % Recreation
_____ % Relaxation
_____ % Mental Stimulation
_____ % Exercise
_____ % Working on Recovery
_____ % Other (things special to you, such as
listening to music, gardening, etc.)

100 % TOTAL

Do these percentages represent balance for you? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you feel good about them?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Step 2:

If not, how can you realistically rearrange the percentages to bring more balance and contentment to your life? Try it in the list below:

_____ % Family
_____ % Work
_____ % School
_____ % Home (maintaining)
_____ % Friends
_____ % Self
_____ % Recreation
_____ % Relaxation
_____ % Mental Stimulation
_____ % Exercise
_____ % Working on Recovery
_____ % Other (things special to you, such as
listening to music, gardening, etc.)

100 % TOTAL

What additional steps will you take to bring more balance to your life?

Now, take a look at the following example and indicate where you think the imbalance lies and how it might be corrected.

Situation 1: Gary gambles nearly every day but hides it from his wife. She thinks he only goes out once a month or so "with the guys" to play poker. In fact, he stops at the track several times a week on his way home from work and tells her he is working late. Sometimes he misses work entirely because of gambling. When he does come home at an appropriate time, he often tells his wife that he has to work on things he has brought home from the office, when in fact he is betting on the Internet or gambling on video games. He rarely engages in family activities because he is busy watching his bets and planning the next event. His two small children see him at home, but he interacts with them very little. He and his wife are beginning to argue about his participation in the family. She resents the fact that he is unavailable to her and the children, both physically and emotionally. He claims he is working hard to provide his family with the things they want and need. Gary also feels he is only having a little recreational fun through gambling to try to relieve the extreme stress he feels about work.

What is the imbalance here? _____

How could it be corrected? _____

Now, take a look at some of the ways in which balance has been missing in your own life.

List at least two ways in which you have lacked balance in your life:

1. _____

2. _____

List two ways in which you are changing and seeing things differently:

1. _____

2. _____



Take a break — think about the following questions and write down your answers.

When you're ready, move on to the next section.

Have you ever felt that a frantic, fast-paced, crisis-filled life was typical for you? If so, why do you think you felt this way?

Have you ever felt detached and not engaged in many areas of your life, and that gambling was your only form of excitement or release? If so, why do you think you felt this way?

Does it seem possible to attain more balance in your life? If yes, how could you begin to attain more balance? If no, why is it not possible for you to attain more balance at this time?

How do you feel that balance will help you in your change program?

Reviewing All Aspects of Your Life

Throughout this series you have been working on changing your thinking and behavior. It has been said many times in these books that your thoughts affect your words, your words affect your actions, and your actions can change your life. In the inventory you took in the sections above, you have examined ways in which you have been thinking and behaving differently and you've seen how your life has been changing. In addition to improving your life through thinking differently and engaging in new behaviors, you may also have been working to establish new habits in place of gambling.

There are two purposes for adding new activities to your life. First, as mentioned previously, it is important that you replace the energy, time, and effort you spent on gambling with other activities. Second, as you begin to engage in new activities, you have the opportunity to meet new friends or reconnect with people you already know. You may find that this is a good opportunity for you to ask someone else to help you in learning a new skill that you can do together or eventually on your own. You may also find that engaging in a new activity can open the door to new people who share a similar

interest with you or to encouraging others to try something new. Either way, finding enjoyable, constructive activities and hobbies is one of the best ways to help you feel exhilarated and happy in your life.

In Book Three: *Staying the Course*, you considered new activities to replace gambling and indicated which activities you might be interested in attempting and people who might be able to help you. At this time, take a look back at your responses in that section and then indicate in the chart on the next page which of these you have implemented.

To refresh your memory, the same list you originally marked has been included on the following page. In the previous exercise you put a checkmark ✓ beside any of the activities you presently engage in and would like to do more of, and you put a star ★ beside any that were new activities for you that you felt you might like to do. As you review the list, take note of the progress you have made.



As you review the Activities Chart on the next page, think about the people you might include in the activity.

When you are ready to review the Activities Chart, turn the page ➡

Activities Chart

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| ☐ Additional Schooling | ☐ Decorating | ☐ Meditation | ☐ Tai Chi |
| ☐ Aerobics | ☐ Dining Clubs | ☐ Music | ☐ Target Shooting |
| ☐ Antiquing | ☐ Driving | ☐ Opera | ☐ Tennis |
| ☐ Archery | ☐ Fishing | ☐ Painting | ☐ Theatre |
| ☐ Ballet | ☐ Flower Arranging | ☐ Photography | ☐ Traveling |
| ☐ Baseball/Softball | ☐ Flying | ☐ Playing Board Games | ☐ Visiting Family |
| ☐ Basketball | ☐ Football | ☐ Playing an Instrument | ☐ Visiting Museums |
| ☐ Boating | ☐ Gardening | ☐ Racing | ☐ Volleyball |
| ☐ Bowling | ☐ Genealogy | ☐ Racquetball | ☐ Volunteering |
| ☐ Camping | ☐ Going to Art Shows | ☐ Reading | ☐ Walking |
| ☐ Carpentry | ☐ Going to Movies | ☐ Remodeling | ☐ Watching TV |
| ☐ Ceramics | ☐ Golfing | ☐ Rollerblading | ☐ Weightlifting |
| ☐ Climbing | ☐ Hang Gliding | ☐ Running | ☐ White Water Rafting |
| ☐ Coin Collecting | ☐ Hiking | ☐ Sailing | ☐ Windsurfing |
| ☐ Computing | ☐ Hockey | ☐ Sculpting | ☐ Writing |
| ☐ Concerts | ☐ Horseback Riding | ☐ Sewing | ☐ Woodworking |
| ☐ Cooking/Baking | ☐ Housework | ☐ Skiing | ☐ Yoga |
| ☐ Crafts | ☐ Karaoke | ☐ Singing | ☐ Other (specify): |
| ☐ Crochet/Knitting | ☐ Karate | ☐ Soccer | _____ |
| ☐ Cycling | ☐ Kayaking | ☐ Stamp Collecting | _____ |
| ☐ Dancing | ☐ Learning a Language | ☐ Swimming | _____ |

Activities I Have Tried

1. *In which ones did you actually increase your participation?* _____

2. *How did it make you feel to spend more time in these activities?* _____

3. *Which new activities did you do?* _____

4. *How did you like these activities and will you continue to do them?* _____

If you have not yet worked on adding activities and new interests to your life, write down when you plan to take the time to do this important step in your recovery. Once you begin to engage in new activities, you can respond to the next set of questions.

I plan to consider new activities and engage in a few of them by _____

My Responses to Adding Activities

In answering the next group of questions, consider your responses to spending more time in activities other than gambling. Remember to take your time reflecting on how you honestly feel about your answers to these questions. You may need to think about specific incidences or examples to help you clarify your feelings and emotions.

1. How has the switch from gambling to other pursuits affected you emotionally?

2. How has the switch from gambling to other pursuits affected you physically?

3. How has the switch from gambling to other pursuits affected your relationships with others?

You may also want to ask other people in your life how they would answer the three previous questions about you. While your own thoughts and feelings are critical to your understanding where you are and continuing with your plan for change, it may be helpful to consider the perceptions of others, especially people who may be supporting you in your change program.

Rediscovering Fun and Love

At this point, you deserve to give yourself a pat on the back for sticking with this change program. A commitment is more than just saying the words, and staying the course for the long haul can be very difficult. You are to be congratulated for doing the hard work necessary to make real change in your life.

You are undoubtedly proud of all that you have accomplished, yet still, might be wondering, “When does life become fun again?” or “How can I get love back in my life?” Maybe you have started to find both fun and love as you have experienced the many changes in this series. Maybe you have been so focused on doing the work that you just haven’t let yourself relax.

The key again is balance. Health experts often say that diets don’t work but living a healthy life and making good choices for fitness and eating does. It’s a matter of how you live, not a matter of a quick fix. What you are doing is similar. You are creating a new way of living. This is not something you will do for a short time and then everything will suddenly be totally different. You are building a new life and learning how to live differently.

Keep your mind focused on finding and feeling the happiness that comes with experiencing everyday life in a positive, balanced way.

Now is the time to seek more fun in your life.
Remember what you learned in Book Six:

Rebuilding Your Life — many times what you experience is simply a matter of framing. It can often be in how you choose to view things that meaning is derived. Your loved ones and friends will respond to the **frames** you choose to project and will see how you have changed and how you now view your life.

The following list includes some actions you can take to begin to view life differently and to revitalize your daily activities.

Put a checkmark ✓ beside all that you are doing now.

- ☐ I seek the real me and reflect often on my life and actions.
- ☐ I let the real me shine through and let others see it.
- ☐ I focus on what I do have, not on what I don't.
- ☐ I am striving to be a person of **integrity**.
- ☐ I share my feelings with those I love and care about. I communicate regularly.
- ☐ I am learning to balance all areas of my life.
- ☐ I am learning to enjoy a wide variety of activities.
- ☐ I know this change program is a journey, not a destination.
- ☐ If I make a mistake or slip in my commitment to change, I forgive myself, and start right back where I left off.
- ☐ I ask for help when I need it.
- ☐ I am honest with myself and am aware of my intentions.
- ☐ I know I am in charge of my own life and destiny.



Want to Rebuild Love?

Love is as fragile as trust and can take a very long time to build and much less time to destroy. Some of the steps you can take to begin rebuilding love in your life are listed below:

Listen

Stop your mind from racing and have a conversation with loved ones. Listen to what they say and refrain from responding too quickly. Let them know that you care about how they feel and what they think. Do this often and you will not only get better at it but will also learn some surprising things along the way and reap some great rewards.

Act

Do things to show love. Love is more than a word, it is an action, and to be felt and experienced it must be the result of actions. Show someone you love them by doing small things — asking about their day, listening to what they say, going for a walk together, cooking a special meal, taking on extra responsibilities: all of these things are small ways to demonstrate love. There are thousands more which are specific to your own life and relationships. Show love daily to those you care about.

Communicate

Tell others how you feel. Let them know what you want from them and from the relationship. Let them know what they mean to you. Tell them that what they feel matters to you. Tell them what you will do, and are doing, to change. Then act and follow through on all you have outlined.

It may take a long time to rebuild trust and restore love, so don't try to hurry things. Remember that if you have broken trusts and hurt others through your behaviors as a gambler, it can take a long time to regain that faith. Others may not be as ready as you are to open their hearts. Accept that those closest to you will come to a place of change in their own time, and that there is always the possibility that some may never be able to get beyond the hurt.

No matter how others react to you and your efforts to change, you must always keep in the front of your mind that you are working toward making yourself a better person for *you*. You are changing your life and building a new future. The rewards you will reap will come in time, but you cannot base your change program solely on the hope that it will affect others in your life. This does not mean that others cannot help to provide reasons and impetus for change. Changing your life and rebuilding relationships can lend deep meaning to your commitment. Just remember that the only person you can completely take charge of is yourself. Therefore, whether someone else welcomes the change should not impact how you continue to move forward. This is your life – stay positive and keep moving forward!

Be honest and open.
Speak and act from your heart. Show your love.



Take a break — think about the following questions and write down your answers.

When you're ready, move on to the next section.

What three specific steps will you take to begin to restore fun in your life?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What three specific steps will you take to begin to rebuild love in your life?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Pacing Yourself

Whenever you create a plan to make significant changes in your life, whether it is dealing with a gambling problem, making a decision about an important relationship, or getting a new job, you need to set realistic goals along the way and

pace yourself. When you are initiating a major change program you might feel overwhelmed at the number of aspects of your life you want to work on. You might want to address all of them as fast as you can, just to get to the end. This approach will never work because nothing will get the thoughtful, important consideration that it needs for long lasting change. The best approach is to start with small, manageable pieces that you can easily tackle. A huge goal can seem impossible to achieve. A series of small goals can be more easily achieved and can lead you to the same place. Remember, you didn't get to this point overnight. It took many months, even years to create the life you are leading now. It will take some investment in time to build a new life too. Give yourself the gift of time.

Whatever your goal is, break it down into small manageable pieces. Make a list of these components. You will be able to see your progress and the results of your effort. For example, if one of your goals is to repair your relationship with your spouse, don't simply say, "I'm going to fix my

A huge goal can seem impossible to achieve. A series of small goals can be more easily achieved and can lead you to the same place. Remember, you didn't get to this point overnight. It took many months, even years to create the life you are leading now. It will take some investment in time to build a new life too. Give yourself the gift of time.



marriage" and leave it at that. Also, don't run off and quickly make a handful of surface changes, then lose momentum. Instead engage in a series of smaller goals that will help you to plan for success, such as, "I'm going to be truthful with my wife; I'm going to tell her about my problem; I'm going to get help; I'm going to ask her to be patient with me while I change; and I'm going to show her that I love her." You might just start with one of these, such as "I'm going to be truthful with my wife." After you've done this, then tackle another one of the goals, then another. This way you can positively see your progress and can build in new goals. Eventually, you might indeed find that it is possible to repair your relationship.

This strategy will work for all aspects of your change program. Remember to pace yourself, take one step at a time, and stay in balance. No, it's not easy, but you can do it. In fact, you are the only one who can do it. No one else is going to come in and take charge of your life — it's up to you and you have all the power within you to succeed.



Take a break — think about the following questions and write down your answers.

When you're ready, move on to the next section.

What is your biggest challenge regarding pacing yourself in your change program?

What specific steps can you take to address that challenge?

What is something in your life that you have put your mind and heart behind to achieve?

What helped you to stay motivated to achieve that goal?

What factors, people, or behaviors, might help you to stay motivated to achieve your new goals for positive life change?

Promise for the Future

In Book One you were introduced to the Serenity Prayer, a prayer that has been a cornerstone of self-help programs for many years. Here it is again:

Serenity Prayer

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

The Serenity Prayer focuses on three main ideas:

1. Some things in your life can be changed.
2. Some things in your life cannot be changed.
3. You can learn to know the difference between the two.

People have found this prayer to be helpful regardless of their religious affiliation or beliefs. It can be a powerful tool to help you think clearly and rationally. It can be said aloud or to yourself throughout the day and whenever you feel overwhelmed.

By this point in the series, you should have a pretty good idea of what things you can change and what things you can't change. The key to your future is to focus on those things within your influence and to keep working to build a new life for yourself. All of the power is within you, and you alone. It can be tempting to want outside solutions, or to lay responsibility in other places. In the end, the only person who can step in and change your life is you. It's a powerful concept when you consider it. Your life can be better, richer, filled with love, fun, peace and happiness. You can find contentment in new ways and can step into a future that the *real you* has always dreamed about. You can choose to accept the support of organizations, professionals, loved ones and other resources as you move toward change. It's all within your power. You're already doing it. Keep going, make it happen — you're doing great!

**The power to change
your life is within you
right now.**



Summary

In this book you have examined the changes you have made so far, have looked at ways you can put balance into your life, and have considered steps you can take to initiate fun, rebuild love, and remain committed to change. You've learned about the idea of pacing yourself and know that this kind of major life change will take time. You are doing something that is very difficult and requires heroic effort, but provides substantial rewards. You have considered how you might regain balance in all aspects of your life.

Remind yourself often of the path you have chosen — the path toward recovery and happiness. Review the information in this book and the others in the series as you work each day to achieve positive life change. Use your network of friends, loved ones and others who support you in your plans for abstinence and freedom from gambling to motivate you to continue and to celebrate your achievements. Keep going and know that your success is within your reach and you have everything within you to walk into a new and brighter future.

Remind yourself often of the path you have chosen — the path toward recovery and happiness. Keep going, celebrate your achievements and know that your success is within your reach.

Congratulations!



Glossary

Balanced Life: A life is balanced when time, energy, interest, and effort, are spread reasonably equally among activities and interests across social, physical, emotional, spiritual, and interpersonal areas. Imbalance occurs when too much energy is put into one area at the expense of all others.

Frame: A frame is the belief a person has, usually about themselves or another person, that causes them to think either negatively or positively.

Integrity: Integrity is the state of holding to one's principles and moral values; remaining honorable, sincere, and true to one's beliefs.

Irrational Thinking: Experiencing an enormous degree of difference in thinking about relatively common events is known as irrational thinking.

Pace: To pace yourself means to make progress in a measured way; neither too quickly, nor too slowly.

Powerlessness: Powerlessness is the belief that you can do nothing to alter your circumstances. You may feel that you have no control over certain behavior or actions. This is only a belief. There is always something you can do.

Trigger: A trigger can be people, places and things or they might be emotions or feelings that cause you to react or respond in a manner that can be detrimental to your physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Triggers often lead to relapse.

Additional Resources

There are several resources you might access to help you deal with gambling related issues mentioned in this book. Some of these are listed below:

Statewide Assistance

The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG) offers a toll-free confidential and multilingual 24-hour Problem Gambling HelpLine and referral service that provides supportive intervention, information about problem and compulsive gambling, self-help, and professional treatment referrals. The FCCG trains medical and healthcare professionals to assess and treat compulsive gamblers and loved ones. For additional information about the programs and services of the FCCG, refer to the page prior to the Table of Contents, as well as the following sub-section, *FCCG Resources*.

Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc.
24/7 Problem Gambling HelpLine
Confidential/Multilingual
888-ADMIT-IT (888-236-4848)
Office: (407) 865-6200
E-mail: fccg@gamblinghelp.org
Live Chat: gamblinghelp.org
Text: 321-978-0555
888-ADMIT-IT App:
<https://landing.appypie.com/888-admit-it>
Website: www.gamblinghelp.org

FCCG Resources

The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine offers in-person, online and phone supports for persons experiencing difficulties due to gambling, including an Online Program for Problem Gamblers (OPPG) and a Peer Connect option, free to Florida residents. The OPPG is an 8-week program that allows participants to use self-paced exercises, videos and readings, while interactive questionnaires provide individual feedback on participant results from licensed mental health professionals, as well as an assessment upon completion. The HelpLine further provides a Peer Connect service, which enables individuals seeking help for a gambling problem to speak with a recovering compulsive gambler. 888-ADMIT-IT offers referrals to financial and debt counseling; professional treatment; legal assistance; self-help programs; practical how-to resources, such as this workbook series, *A Chance for Change*, in addition to other print resources, including information and tools for financial recovery, self-exclusion options and other supportive measures.

The FCCG HelpLine may be contacted by phone, text, live chat, email, and on social media platforms. To learn more, visit the 888-ADMIT-IT mobile app.

Self-Help Programs

Self-help is a critical part of the recovery process. Self-help programs can assist you with tools for recovery by providing support, direction, motivation, resources, and a sense that you are not dealing with the gambling problem alone. An aspect of many self-help programs is sponsorship. Sponsors may provide additional information, encouragement, fellowship, and guidance to newcomers on a voluntary basis. They may also furnish assistance and offer suggestions to newcomers on a case-by-case basis.

While there are several self-help organizations, there are primarily two programs dedicated to compulsive gamblers and those they adversely affect.

Gamblers Anonymous (GA) is a support group for compulsive gamblers — a fellowship of men and women of all ages, social and economic backgrounds, races, and religions, who meet regularly to share their experience, strength and hope. The only requirement for membership in GA is the desire to stop gambling. There are no dues or fees for membership.

Gamblers Anonymous offers a Pressure Relief Group that assists the gambler and family members in addressing financial, legal, and other problems. Pressure Relief is typically performed after a gambler has participated in GA for a specified period, at which time

a budget is devised, and a repayment plan is recommended. Pressure Relief requires special training and as such, not all GA fellowships within the State of Florida offer this service. In instances where it is unavailable, individuals can receive financial, legal and other assistance via the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling's 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine.

Gamblers Anonymous
International Service Office
1306 Monte Vista Avenue, Suite 5
Upland, CA 91786
Office: 909-931-9056
Email: isomain@gamblersanonymous.org
Website: www.gamblersanonymous.org

Gam-Anon is for persons adversely affected by the gambler's activities (e.g., spouse or partner, sibling, child, parent, or friend). Gam-Anon assists members in learning acceptance and understanding of the gambling illness, using the program and its problem-solving suggestions as aids in rebuilding loved ones' lives and, upon recovery, giving assistance to those who suffer. It is not necessary for the gambler to attend Gamblers Anonymous in order for a friend or other loved one to participate in the Gam-Anon program.

Gam-Anon
International Service Office, Inc.
P.O. Box 307
Massapequa Park, NY 11762
Office: 718-352-1671

Additional Resources (continued)

Email: gamanonoffice@gam-anon.org

Website: www.gam-anon.org

You can contact the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling HelpLine directly for additional information and a current list of in-person, phone and online meetings.

Professional Treatment

There are times when guidance and support can be particularly helpful when provided by a trained therapist or counselor. These professionals can aid you in sorting out options and strategies when learning to cope with situations or difficulties that may arise in your life. Professional treatment differs from self-help programs in that it allows you the opportunity to share very personal information in a one-on-one dialogue with a trained specialist. Such treatment also provides you with an option of participating in individual, couple, or group counseling sessions.

While there is a cost for professional treatment, some insurance companies will provide coverage. So, it is important to review your policy closely to determine whether you and your loved ones are covered for such medical help. It is also important to note that the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling can refer Florida residents to certified counselors who will furnish you and loved ones with treatment supports, based upon an ability to pay. For more information about professional treatment options, call the FCCG 24-hour HelpLine at 888-ADMIT-IT.

Online Supports, Podcasts and Mobile Apps

Online Supports, Podcasts, and Mobile Apps can provide real-time, and ongoing motivational messaging, meditation techniques, support networks, and other self-care and stress release activities, that support behavioral change and assist individuals during their lifelong path to recovery from a gambling addiction. These options enable individuals to access help as needed and serve as supportive measures from anywhere at any time. While many of these options are identifiable upon conducting online searches on a computer or on a mobile device, the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine can provide some helpful options for those struggling with difficulties due to compulsive gambling.

Print Resources

There are numerous resources designed to help problem and compulsive gamblers with issues ranging from stress reduction to financial and legal assistance. While many can be very helpful, they should not be considered stand-alone programs for change. Some recommended resources include:

Cuban, M. (2016). *Gambling Addiction Cure: Gambling Addiction Cure and Recovery of Your Life*, Independently Published.

Cunliffe North, R. (2008). *Women Overpowered by Compulsive Gambling*, Xlibris Corporation.

Custer, R. & Milt, H. (1985) *When Luck Runs Out*. NY, NY: Facts on Files, Inc. Publications.

Davis, D.R. (2009). *Taking Back Your Life: Women and Problem Gambling*, Hazelden Publishing.

Estes, K. & Brubaker, M. (1994). *Deadly Odds: Recovery from Compulsive Gambling*. Newport, RI: Edgehill Publications.

Gamblers Anonymous (2013). *Fourth Step Inventory Moral Book*, Los Angeles; Gamblers Anonymous Publishing, Revised March 2007, Printed October 2013.

Gamblers Anonymous (2007). *Big Book - Sharing Recovery Through Gamblers Anonymous*. Los Angeles: Gamblers Anonymous Publishing.

Hardin, R., Abott, W., Braastad, J., Frahm, J., Lindel, R., Phillips, R., & Steinberger, H. (2013). *SMART Recovery 3rd Edition Handbook*, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Self Help Network, Inc.

Journal of Gambling Studies (1990). National Council on Problem Gambling. NY, NY: Human Sciences Press.

King, A. (1999). *The Diary of a Powerful Addiction*. Crown Publishing, Tyndall, Canada.

Lee, Bill (2005). *Born to Lose: Memoirs of a Compulsive Gambler*, Hazeldon Publishing.

Lesieur, H. (1984). *The Chase: Career of the Compulsive Gambler*, Cambridge: Schenkman Books, Inc.

Mawer, P. (2019). *Overcoming Gambling (Overcoming Common Problems)*, Sheldon Press.

Peltz, L. (2013). *The Mindful Path to Addiction Recovery: A Practical Guide to Regaining Control Over Your Life*, Trumpeter.

Wexler, A. & Wexler, S. (2015). *All Bets Are Off: Losers, Liars, and Recovery from Gambling Addiction*, Central Recovery Press.

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Berman, L. & Siegel, M. (2012) *Behind the 8-Ball: A Recovery Guide for the Families of Gamblers*, iUniverse.

Colarusso, C. & Nemiroff, R. (1990). *New Dimensions in Adult Development*. NY, NY: Basic Books.

Ladouceur, R., Sylvain, C., Boutin, C., & Douvet, C. (2002). *Understanding and Treating the Pathological Gambler*. NY, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

LeDoux, J. (1996). *The Emotional Brain*. NY, NY: Touchstone Publishing.

McMillen, J. (1999). *Better For It: How People Benefit from Adversity*. Social Work, Vol. 44.

Moore, L. (1995). *Release From Powerlessness: A Guide for Taking Charge of Your Life*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Neenan, M. & Dryden, M. (2002). *Life Coaching: A Cognitive, Behavioral Approach*. NY, NY: Brunner Routledge.

Saltz, G. (2004). *Becoming Real*. NY, NY: Riverhead Books.

Seligman, M. (2007). *What You Can Change and What You Can't: The Complete Guide to Successful Self-Improvement*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Notes



Notes



Notes



Notes



Notes



Worksheet

Goal for Change: _____

Progress you have made so far: _____

Actions you will take next: _____

Goal for change: _____

Progress you have made so far: _____

Actions you will take next: _____

Goal for change: _____

Progress you have made so far: _____

Actions you will take next: _____

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Goal for change: _____

Progress you have made so far: _____

Actions you will take next: _____



The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling's development of *A Chance for Change* is the result of an identified need for alternate forms of education and assistance to those whose lives are negatively affected by a devastating gambling disorder (compulsive gambling).

www.gamblinghelp.org