**Perseverance, Entry #1 of 4**

We may tire mentally in repeating our new ideas and tire physically in our new activities, yet we know that if we fail to repeat them we will surely take up our old practices (Basic Text, Chapter 7, “Recovery and Relapse”).

Many of us can say: “Relapse is a part of my story.”

From our own experience and from listening to each other share, we know that the possibility that we might not stay clean is very real. What causes an addict in recovery to choose to get high again? It can be anything, really, but an unaware “I got this” can be especially dangerous. We tire of hearing the message, sharing the message, and, frankly, each other. The sun goes down and comes back up on what seems like the same day. We become increasingly cranky and unfulfilled. Having become disillusioned with life clean but without recovery, maybe we even quit going to meetings. Eventually, we reach outside of ourselves to fix our insides and use again. When we come back to the rooms, we tell our story of complacency and sitting on that Step work.

While there are endless versions of the relapse story, we all have heard the ones that don’t have happy NA endings. Not everybody makes it back to NA and has the opportunity for another go at recovery. Knowing we could die out there—or not die but bring ruin to our livelihood and relationships—doesn’t keep us clean. So...what does?

We know the answer to the question. It’s pushing through with the basics of Steps, service, sponsor, and Higher Power. It’s breathing life into our recovery in whatever ways we can. Start a new meeting? Take on another sponsee? Read the daily “SPAD” entry? It’s doing what we all have done in the past, again, just for today. It’s carrying the message to a newcomer to remind ourselves of where we came from and what was so freely given to us. It’s not picking up, even when we want to. It’s staying, even when we don’t want to. Perseverance can be an antidote to complacency. We want to live, so we have to keep on living.

We don’t need a new relapse story, or one at all. It’s preventable, not inevitable.

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*Today I will honor the blessings I have already worked this hard for by repeating what I know works. I want to keep what I have.*
Perseverance, Entry #2 of 4

The process of recovery isn’t easy. It takes great courage and perseverance to continue in recovery day after day (*It Works*, Step One).

The gift of desperation gets many of us through the door and propels us into the footwork of early recovery. If we’re very lucky, we might experience a bit of elation and optimism sometimes referred to as a “pink cloud” in the first weeks of recovery. Enjoy it while it lasts!

In time, the challenges of life in recovery present themselves. Some of us have faced a lifetime of difficulties so we’re no strangers to trouble. The difficulties we face in recovery have a different feel to them, however. As one member described it: “I could see a light at the end of the tunnel and I knew it wasn’t a train coming the other way.” Inspired by that light—our faith that our efforts will pay off—we persevere by putting one foot in front of the other.

A foundation in recovery helps us to endure life’s difficulties. Even with some time clean, our choices don’t always pan out. Working a program doesn’t make us immune from life’s struggles: financial problems, relationship trouble, health concerns, and housing instability plague clean addicts, too. We try to be honest and reflective, owning our part in the problems that come our way.

The disease may rear its ugly head during tough times. We might be drawn to act out in new ways, reaching outside of ourselves to soothe the angst within. Our character defects sometimes put on new disguises and find different hiding places. We hit new lows clean.

The good news is that our tolerance for spiritual or emotional pain lessens over time, so we’re quicker to get into the solution. We know that the Twelve Steps are a reliable source of relief. We return to the First Step again and again and surrender in different areas of our lives. It takes guts to face the various manifestations of our disease. We summon the necessary courage and persist.

I will be steadfast in my recovery and have the courage to look at where the disease is showing up today. Where do I need to apply Step One in my life now?
Perseverance, Entry #3 of 4

As new things are revealed, we feel renewed. We need to stay open-minded and willing to do that one extra thing... (Basic Text, Chapter 10, “More Will Be Revealed”).

Though not all of us arrive in NA with tons of willingness and enthusiasm to change everything about our lives, we tend to be open enough to try something different. We’re here, aren’t we? So we might as well take that “90 meetings in 90 days” suggestion. We get a home group and take on a commitment. We greet newcomers. With some effort and perseverance, we begin to work a program and to feel better, even renewed.

In time, many of us get to a point where those feelings of renewal get old. The well dries up. We aren’t having daily epiphanies of self-realization. Our life is more stable, sure, but is it still getting better? Do we have to keep doing the NA same old, same old: hearing the same shares, reading the same literature, drinking the same weak tea or bitter coffee?

“Don’t leave before the miracle,” we’ve heard our fellow members say time and again. While many of us don’t believe in miracles, per se, our experience has shown us that if we stay—stay in the room, stay open-minded, stay available to another addict, stay clean—our lives will continue to improve. And we will be better prepared for those times when life’s unpredictability presents us with challenges.

We never know where we’re going to hear just what we need to help us through our next phase of recovery. It’s often in the meeting that we really don’t want to go to, the speaker we’ve heard a thousand times, or the phone call we begrudgingly answer. We may not have even noticed that we were stuck until a message moves us into action. When we can push through our resistance, especially when it comes to helping others, we reap enormous benefits for our spiritual growth. The miracle of this program is continually revealed through our perseverance.

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Today I’m going to find that one extra thing to do and have faith that I’ll be re-energized in my recovery. Whether or not I feel that rush of renewal, I’ll do it again tomorrow. And the day after that.
**Perseverance, Entry #4 of 4**

Caring for our spiritual condition is like cleaning the house: If we want the benefit, the work must be ongoing (*Living Clean*, Chapter One).

We experience peace of mind and freedom when we consistently work on our spiritual fitness. We get in a groove of daily inventories, prayer and meditation, and helping other addicts. The results are obvious, and it feels great to be comfortable in our own skin, connected to a Higher Power and to others in recovery. It’s a beautiful thing—until we sabotage it!

Just as it’s easier to keep a home tidy after we’ve done a double-scrub, steady work on our recovery yields consistently good results. And yet, it’s so flipping easy to skip our daily inventory and, before we know it, several days or weeks or months have passed. It’s no surprise when we lose perspective and our lives become unmanageable again. We sit down, reluctantly, and recommit to our Tenth Step. A sense of relief returns. Maybe next time, we’ll only wait a few days before we sit down to write. Progress!

We may not be hardwired to persevere, but we get better at it with practice. We can start again at any time. We don’t need to devolve into a state of desperation before we reach for solutions; today, we can be *inspired* to do the work of ongoing recovery. We notice the sense of ease we enjoy when we stay immersed in the process. We keep our eyes on that prize and persevere.

Each of us develops a routine that works for us, built from the suggestions shared in the experience of others. “When I see a member struggling, I always tell them that my best days start with a quick prayer before my feet hit the floor,” one member shared. Another shared about their eclectic approach to meditation: “A couple of deep breaths in the shower or a long walk after dinner does it for me.” The trick is sticking with it and, when that fails, getting back to it.

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I will evaluate my spiritual condition today. Am I getting the results I want from my current routine or is it time for a spiritual double scrub?