

The 12 Steps of Unity of Gamblers Anonymous

Unity Step 1

OUR COMMON WELFARE SHOULD COME FIRST; PERSONAL RECOVERY DEPENDS UPON GROUP UNITY.

Our common welfare is based upon the desire to stop gambling and to solve our common problem. Personal recovery depends upon this common goal. When one maintains abstinence from gambling, we improve our quality of life. We then see that our common good is primary as we recover individually in unity with each other. A group that is troubled due to personality conflicts, indifference to others, individual ambitions, super egos, compulsive talkers, disruptive members and others who openly indicate that group unity is not essential, will certainly be unable to carry our message, and in time the group will cease effectively to exist.

Gambling can shatter and perhaps destroy the gambler but an individual who gambles cannot destroy the Group. In the early days, we wondered if the Group could survive the many individual relapses. Today, we know the Group will survive.

Unity Step 2

OUR LEADERS ARE BUT TRUSTED SERVANTS; THEY DO NOT GOVERN.

Gamblers Anonymous relies primarily on group conscience to keep it functioning. Leaders with the Fellowship are entrusted to carry out the will and conscience of the group. They have assigned responsibilities but they act only within the authority granted to them by the group.

We shall be held responsible if we elect irresponsible Trusted Servants who cannot serve the group in the manner determined by the "Ultimate Authority" which is the spiritual concept of "Group Conscience". They are not elected to command, order, demand, change, alter but simply to serve and express the opinions determined by the group through a conscious consideration of opinions expressed by all members of that group. Trusted Servants in each group are rotated, so that each of us may be reminded and remember that we serve for the good of all, without authority over anyone.

Ego and pride tend to become lost if one listens to the Group conscience. Acceptance is the spirit and trait which can carry one through.

Unity Step 3

THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS MEMBERSHIP IS A DESIRE TO STOP GAMBLING.

Regardless of who a person is, or how grave their emotional, legal or financial complications may be, Gamblers Anonymous welcomes anyone who demonstrates a desire to stop gambling.

For membership, it is not necessary that one pay dues or sign a pledge. Those who have returned to gambling are especially encouraged to attend meetings and get help because it is the desire to stop gambling - not the abstinence - that is required for membership.

Expressing a desire to stop gambling doesn't always mean that the member can overcome the strong urge to gamble, but nevertheless, it is the desire that is the requirement.

Unity Step 4

EACH GROUP SHOULD BE SELF-GOVERNING EXCEPT IN MATTERS AFFECTING OTHER GROUPS OR GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS AS A WHOLE.

Each Gamblers Anonymous group has great latitude to conduct its affairs within the framework of the Fellowship. This preserves the freedom of choice that is so important to the group conscience. The conduct of each group is limited only to the extent that its actions would conflict with the Guidance Code of Gamblers Anonymous.

What type of meeting, how long the meeting lasts, break or no break, etc. affects no one but those at that meeting. However, the breaking of anonymity is something that affects others and is not a group choice.

Unity Step 5

GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS HAS BUT ONE PRIMARY PURPOSE - TO CARRY ITS MESSAGE TO THE COMPULSIVE GAMBLER WHO STILL SUFFERS.

Personal direction and purpose of life are often different for each of us but hopefully we shall remember that the one common bond of responsibility that we share on a group level is to carry the message of hope to the compulsive gambler who still suffers. It should be noted that the suffering compulsive gambler can be sitting next to you at your meeting as well as those who have never heard of Gamblers Anonymous.

Reaching compulsive gamblers is a major goal around which the members of Gamblers Anonymous gather in unity. The perpetuation of the Fellowship depends on the practice of this principle. The reason for this singleness of purpose is to maximize the efficiency of the Fellowship's efforts to carry its message to suffering compulsive gamblers, in or outside of the Fellowship. The gift of recovery works best when it is shared.

Unity Step 6

GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS OUGHT NEVER ENDORSE, FINANCE, OR LEND THE GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS NAME TO ANY RELATED FACILITY OR OUTSIDE ENTERPRISE, LEST PROBLEMS OF MONEY, PROPERTY AND PRESTIGE DIVERT US FROM OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE.

Most fundamental at this point is the constant awareness that Gamblers Anonymous is so willing to cooperate but not "Affiliate" with any outside enterprise. Any other course presents the possibility of controversy clouded behind the motives and direction of any well-meaning group or individual, creating a diversion from the primary purpose of Gamblers Anonymous. If we were to apply our energies toward any "related facilities" would we then set aside time and attention required to share with the suffering compulsive gambler? And would we then suffer from internal strife as we argue over money, rules, requirements; frightening? Yes. So we preserve the tradition of not lending the Gamblers Anonymous name.

Gamblers Anonymous works in large part because the program is kept pure of outside interests. Energy, time and money would be wasted by supporting any outside cause or organization. Such support would also be detrimental to the public acceptance of individual groups or the Fellowship as a whole. Endorsement of anything outside of the Fellowship would lead to internal disagreement. For these reasons, Gamblers Anonymous also takes no part in political causes or public issues.

This tradition warns us to stay within our area of expertise. One gambler helping the other is the reason for our existence. We should confine our actions to helping other compulsive gamblers for the maximum result and without the possibility of offending anyone.

Unity Step 7

EVERY GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS GROUP OUGHT TO BE FULLY SELF-SUPPORTING, DECLINING OUTSIDE CONTRIBUTIONS.

In order to maintain the independence of the Fellowship as a whole as well as individual groups, Gamblers Anonymous does not accept outside contributions. This policy is sustained in order that no undue control can be exercised over Gamblers Anonymous, from without or within. By allowing outside contributions both groups and members would be deprived of exercising responsibility over their affairs and their obligation to the Fellowship.

If anyone were to be permitted to contribute to Gamblers Anonymous other than its members, that person might expect the right to voice an opinion as to the manner that we choose to run our Fellowship

Unity Step 8

GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS SHOULD REMAIN FOREVER NON-PROFESSIONAL, BUT OUR SERVICE CENTERS MAY EMPLOY SPECIAL WORKERS.

Gamblers Anonymous operates on the principle that compulsive gamblers can best help each other recover without the use of outside professional services. Gamblers Anonymous members believe that they are the most qualified to conduct the Fellowship's affairs.

The validity of professional therapy is not in question. Gamblers Anonymous members are free to seek outside help, if they so choose. However, if professional therapists were to operate within the Fellowship, their views might conflict with Gamblers Anonymous principles. By remaining non-professional, Gamblers Anonymous avoids the controversies that would inevitably arise.

It becomes quite clear there is a need to employ special workers to handle the necessary functions of an office designed to fulfill certain responsibilities to Gamblers Anonymous. However, the principle concept is our responsibility to a new member - counseling, guidance, pressure meetings, etc., as well as the need to create an awareness for others that there is a recovery program through Gamblers Anonymous - should remain free of any financial remuneration, keeping in mind that we must put back what we received.

Unity Step 9

GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS, AS SUCH, OUGHT NEVER BE ORGANIZED; BUT WE MAY CREATE SERVICE BOARDS OR COMMITTEES DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO THOSE THEY SERVE.

Gamblers Anonymous is run by the spirit of service and not the force of vested authority. In order to avoid the problems inherent in the authority, Gamblers Anonymous is not organized in the formal hierarchy. The Fellowship has no central autonomous leadership. The service boards that have been created have no formal veto power and are responsible to the will of the membership as a whole.

The International Service Office, Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees have been set up by the membership of Gamblers Anonymous to administer and guide the Fellowship. These groups do not have power within themselves but they are responsible to each other, and to the entire membership.

At each and every level we assume responsibility, not authority, for there needs to be some way to get the work done.

Unity Step 10

GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS HAS NO OPINIONS ON OUTSIDE ISSUES; HENCE THE GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS NAME OUGHT NEVER TO BE DRAWN INTO PUBLIC CONTROVERSY.

The survival and proliferation of Gamblers Anonymous is of far greater importance than taking positions on any issues outside the Fellowship. To make public pronouncements on non-Fellowship matters would inevitably split the group. Individuals naturally have differing opinions and eventually these differences could erode group solidarity. By engaging in outside issues, the Fellowship's concentration would be diverted from a therapeutic purpose, which is to aid in the recovery of compulsive gamblers. The association of the Fellowship's name with public controversy would unnecessarily antagonize some portion of the general public. By avoiding controversy, both individual groups and the Fellowship as a whole are able to concentrate on the aims and principles of Gamblers Anonymous.

We must always be available to assist others in obtaining information concerning the problem of compulsive gambling without giving our opinion.

Unity Step 11

OUR PUBLIC RELATIONS POLICY IS BASED ON ATTRACTION RATHER THAN PROMOTION; WE NEED ALWAYS MAINTAIN PERSONAL ANONYMITY AT THE LEVEL OF PRESS, RADIO, FILMS, TELEVISION AND INTERNET.

Gamblers Anonymous does not compare itself to any other group, nor does it boast of its accomplishments and abilities to the public. However, Gamblers Anonymous does make itself available to anyone interested in the Fellowship or in the gambling problem.

In order to make the Fellowship visible, Gamblers Anonymous informs and educates the public about the problem of compulsive gambling and about the Fellowship itself. Personal stories of members in newspapers, magazines, on radio and television, as well as spot announcements all help to spread an awareness of Gamblers Anonymous. The Fellowship does not glorify the name of Gamblers Anonymous or its merits as a group rather, it works to encourage compulsive gamblers attend the Fellowship's meetings.

Personal publicity is always shunned, and anonymity is carefully preserved because the Fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous is more important than any one member. By maintaining this policy, any problems that accrue to an individual member cannot harm the Fellowship. Similarly, any achievements attained by individuals working in the program, benefit the group as a whole. This step is a constant and practical reminder that personal ambition has no place within the Fellowship's public relations program.

There is a need to present to the public an insight to the problem of compulsive gambling, its effects and the program of recovery offered by the Gamblers Anonymous Fellowship. This can be accomplished with respect and dignity. In the meaning of this Unity Step it is not breaking anonymity if we choose to relate to family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. that we are member of Gamblers Anonymous.

The Fellowship does not boast about our accomplishments or beat the drum for new members. We do not promote the name of Gamblers Anonymous.

Unity Step 12

ANONYMITY IS THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF THE GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS PROGRAM, EVER REMINDING US TO PLACE PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES.

The most simple expression of humility can be considered our anonymity. As the 12 Recovery Steps deal with us on an individual basis, the 12 Steps of Unity help us deal in working with others.

The 12 Steps of Unity repeatedly ask individuals to give up personal desires for the common good. Thus, the spirit of humility, which is the basis for anonymity, prevails. Members willingly sacrifice personal identity in order to preserve the collective reputation of the Fellowship and the group.

In Gamblers Anonymous, the principles of the Fellowship are placed before personalities, without exception. With the practice of anonymity, the principles of humility is truly at work, and it is this all-encompassing quality that permeates Gamblers Anonymous life everywhere