

STEP TWO

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

In Step One, we admitted our powerlessness. For some of us, this was a devastating admission. We looked back at our years of nicotine addiction and at all our attempts to quit. Every attempt had failed. We realized that we could not stop. Neither self-recrimination, will power, nor analysis of our situation helped. We felt like failures. We asked, "Why can't we quit when everyone else can?"

Now at Step Two we began to find answers to our questions. Having admitted our own powerlessness, we began to open ourselves to finding a source of power greater than ourselves, greater than our addiction. Out of the despair and without understanding why, there came an awareness of an alternative. We accepted the possibility of hope.

Those of us who had a positive spiritual connection looked to God, as we understood God, as the alternative, as the source of hope. For those of us who had developed a skeptical attitude about religion, coming to believe in a Higher Power was no small task. We found that our original conception of a Power greater than ourselves had failed us. We rebelled against attempts to convince us of fixed ideas about God. We resisted involvement in an unquestioning faith.

Acknowledging our skepticism, we learned that we didn't even have a definition of God or a Power greater than ourselves. We could just act as if we believed, trusting when we did not know or understand. "Coming to believe" was a process. It had nothing to do with logic, reason, certainty, or figuring things out. Instead, it had to do with our own personal convictions, with an open mind, flexibility, and a willingness to allow something good to happen to ourselves.

With our openness, we examined the phrase "restore us to sanity." We had always thought of ourselves as fairly sane. But how could we have thought that, when 20, 40, 60 or more times a day, we continued to smoke when we knew it was killing us?

At first, the notion of insanity seemed dramatic, especially to apply it to ourselves. We listened at meetings to others' stories. Hearing their tales of dangerous midnight cigarette runs, plucking butts out of gutters, garbage cans and public ashtrays,

and smoking through tracheotomy tubes, caused us to remember similar behavior of our own. We saw our own insanity -- repeating the same actions over and over, expecting the results to be different.

Admitting our insanity around nicotine would have left us in despair if our only solution had been our own willpower. Left on our own, there was no way out. Somebody, something -- some *Power* -- had to help.

We saw others' success, and we listened when they suggested that we suspend our rational thinking and give this other Power an opportunity to work in our lives. As we began to hear what they were saying, there was a sense of hope. We were not alone after all. This Power and our connection to it and to other people was the doorway to a life free from nicotine.

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