

Things: stems, vials, lighters, cocktail glasses... There's an AA saying, "If you hang out in the barbershop, eventually you'll get a haircut."

Phone numbers Telephone numbers are our lifeline. Members who have been around for a while are happy to share their experience, strength, hope—and time. Always carry the numbers of friends in the program. Many of us make a habit of calling someone, our sponsor or a friend in the program daily. As for our own phone numbers, many of us changed them to avoid getting tempting calls from dealers and using friends.

Prayer Reaching out to a higher power—whether we believe in one or not—has an incredibly calming effect on us. Many of us pray in the morning, asking for help to stay sober another day, and at night, saying a simple thank-you when we make it to bed sober. **"Principles not personalities"** People in the fellowship may sometimes let us down, but the principles of the 12 Steps never will. We never let someone else who is working our nerves keep us from seeking the recovery we deserve.

"Progress, not perfection" We try not to be so hard on ourselves. Even Bill W., AA's founder, had problems.

Smart feet Knowing when and where meetings are; having a usual routine; attending meetings even though we are busy, bored or don't want to be bothered, because we know it's good for us. **Spirituality** Not to be confused with religion.

CMA is a spiritual program of recovery, but the spiritual path in CMA is very personal and individual. In CMA, we find our own higher power and our own way of communicating w/it. **Sponsors** Another recovering addict, with a year or more of clean time, who mentors us in our recovery.

Steps There are 12 of them, and they work. The process of self-discovery they describe unfolds organically the longer you stay sober, but it's best to really work on them—with a sponsor.

"Stick with the winners" We try to hang out with people who have good attitudes and some clean and sober time in the program.

Suggestions Most of us needed a lot of humility to come to our first CMA meeting. Admitting that we don't have the answers to our difficulties, as hard as it is, is the source of our serenity.

Surrender Also "Surrender to win." This is the core of the program; it's really explored in Step Three. Surrender is not defeat, it's joining the winning side. Basically, we are willing to try some other way—ours wasn't getting us anywhere.

Traditions There are 12 of these, too. The code of conduct for the organization, they are the principles that guide CMA meetings and the group as a whole.

Triggers People, places and things that remind us of using, and anything else—a fight, depression, being hungry, angry, lonely and/or tired—that upsets our equilibrium enough to make us want to use.

"We are only as sick as our secrets" Openness takes the toxic strength out of shame. If something is eating away at us, we share about it at meetings and with our sponsor.

Yets These are things we have yet to do but that, knowing the way our minds work, we might encounter on our next relapse. Addiction is a progressive disease. If we go out, it will most likely be worse next time.

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Tools Of Recovery

SDCMA

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(Purple)

Tools of Recovery: A to Z

Here are some helpful suggestions – basic tools – to help you stay sober.

"A drug is only an arm's length away" Slipping is easy: a moment's inattention, wrong time, wrong place.

"A slip is the end of a process" Also "On the road to a slip, the first step is to get rid of your sponsor, "A slip occurs before you pick up."

Abstinence We can't get high if we don't pick up that first drug or drink. We've learned that using other drugs – alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, inhalants – can lead us back to crystal meth or into other addictions. We believe in total abstinence. Using alcohol or drugs invariably triggers our addiction.

Acceptance "...Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change..." We can't fix everything – certainly not our addiction. We just had to calm down and accept that. And remind ourselves with the Serenity Prayer as needed.

Act as if Also "Fake it till you make it." Life is totally different when we're first getting sober – full of crazy feelings and fears, excitement and gratitude. When we don't know what to do in a certain situation or state of mind, we ask for a suggestion from our sponsor or another person in the program. We can't "think" our way to right actions, but we can "act" our way to right thoughts. **Action** "...Courage to change the things I can." Life is a program of action. Most of us started small with things like going to meetings or making our beds.

Big Book The Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, is the basic text of recovery. Most of us read it from time to time, some of us are in study groups where we use it to work the steps.

Bookending If we need to do something or go somewhere that may make us want to use – meeting an ex, the office holiday party, a first date – many of us check in with a program friend before we go and after we're done.

Burning desires If a meeting is ending and we have not been called on, but think we might use if we don't get a chance to share, we take the "burning

desire" when it is announced. If we are still not called on, we grab someone right away after the meeting to talk.

Chips When we were counting days, most of us raised our hands and shared our progress with the groups. Those plastic key chains we receive from various meetings as we reach new sober anniversaries are among our most valued possessions.

Coffee Between fellowship, meetings with friends and sponsors, and just generally showing up for life on time now that we're sober, a lot of us drink more coffee than we used to. This can make us very anxious.

Compare and despair We try not to compare our insides to someone else's outsides.

"Easy does it" We tried not to take on too much in early sobriety.

Feelings are not facts Just because we feel that everyone hates us (or whatever) doesn't mean they do.

Fellowship The meeting after the meeting. We go for hamburgers and coffee, discuss topics and feelings brought up by the meeting, and chat.

"First things first" We learned to prioritize.

"Give time time" Getting sober takes time, and we addicts tend to be impatient people.

"Go to any lengths" We did some sick stuff in our pursuit of drugs; we work just as hard to stay sober.

If we used every day, we can go meetings every day.

Good Orderly Direction One popular conception of a higher power: doing the next right thing.

Group Of Drunks another useful concept of a higher power (from AA): people helping each other get and stay sober.

"Half measures availed us nothing" We have to give sobriety our all or we won't succeed.

H.A.L.T. Don't get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired. An afternoon spent struggling with cravings can be explained with these four words. We check in on our physical and emotional condition periodically. Eat regular meals at regular mealtimes. Talk about it a lot with your sponsor and others. Go to a meeting, call someone. Take a nap, go to sleep early, schedule less.

H.O.W. Honesty, Open-Mindedness, Willingness, the basic tenets behind Steps One, Two and Three. This is H.O.W. it works: We get honest, we open our minds, and we become willing to surrender and work a program.

Just for today We stay sober one day at a time. **"Keep it simple"** Also "Keep it simple, stupid." We tried not to do anything too drastic while we were learning how to live sober, on the proven principle that anything we put in front of our sobriety would take us back out.

Keep right size When we are feeling really lousy – or really super – we try to keep our objectivity. Our low self-esteem and grandiosity led us into addiction in the first place.

"Keep the memory green" We must never forget that we are powerless over crystal and other drugs. **Make your bed** This is just one example of how we take care of ourselves in small ways we couldn't when we used – we deserve a nice clean bed at night.

Meditation We found this is not as mystical as it sounds: We just sit quietly somewhere for a few minutes and listen to our breath – in, out, in, out, in, out... Anxiety melts away, and our higher power comes in.

Meetings At meetings we share our successes and struggles, learn about the steps, explore our spirituality, make friends. We've seen how "meeting makers make it."

90 in 90 People who "keep coming back" have a much better chance of recovering. We recommend 90 meetings in 90 days. Try out different meetings and fellowships.

One day at a time It's too overwhelming to think we'll never use again. We focus on doing whatever it takes to stay clean today. Worry about tomorrow when it comes.

Outside issues If we are depressed, we get help – therapy, antidepressants, economic assistance.

People, places and things We stay away from anything we identify that reminds us of using. Dealers, party/sex buddies, friends we ran with, or others in our lives who throw off our sobriety. Places: bars, clubs, certain streets or corners, or other places we associate with copping or using.