

# **GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS**

# **YOUNG GAMBLERS IN RECOVERY**

## *What is Gamblers Anonymous?*

Gamblers Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women of all ages who share their experience, strength, and hope so that they may help each other to recover from a gambling problem. Compulsive gambling is an illness, progressive in its nature, which can be arrested through the Gamblers Anonymous program.

### ***Why am I here?***

People attend Gamblers Anonymous for different reasons. You may have come at the urging of family or because of difficulties at school or work. Maybe you are just tired of the lying, secrets, and lost money. In short, people come to G.A. for many reasons. No matter what your reason, be assured Gamblers Anonymous does not pass judgment on what you have done. Your age should not inhibit you from joining the fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous. G.A.'s only purpose is to be helpful to anyone with a genuine desire to stop gambling. If anything, being young could be an advantage. Seeking the G.A. way of life now may prevent a lifetime of misery.

### ***Am I really a Compulsive Gambler?***

Our literature says: "...only you can make that decision," so let us examine this question. You called the help line. You're at a meeting. You're reading this pamphlet. At the very least you've acknowledged there might be a problem. If you are still unsure about whether you are indeed a compulsive gambler, we encourage you to look at the G.A. Twenty Questions. These are on pages 15 and 16 of the yellow Gamblers Anonymous Combo Book. Answer the questions truthfully. Our experience suggests that if you answer, "yes" to two or more questions you may have a problem; if you answer, "yes" to seven or more then you almost certainly are one of us - a compulsive gambler.

### ***Is it necessary to hit Rock Bottom in order to stop Gambling?***

Rock Bottom is a term you might well encounter when you first attend meetings. You may hear of members who have arrived at G.A. from psychiatric institutions, rehab centers, or correctional facilities. You may hear of others who have lost families, jobs, and possessions. These members sometimes refer to such events as their Rock Bottom. One member's rock bottom might be the loss of someone near and dear; another member's might be the fear of the loss of someone near and dear. G.A. has many members young and old who arrived at their first meeting well before they had reached such depths. But G.A. also has many members (young and old) who had arrived at their first meeting well before they had reached such depths. Whatever the Rock Bottom, one thing remains true for both members - they are compulsive. Neither is able to stop gambling once they place the first bet. Is it necessary to hit Rock Bottom in order to stop gambling? NO! Your story may be less dramatic but is no less powerful. When you listen to the devastation gambling causes others, instead of saying, "I have not done that," add the word "YET" (You're Eligible Too). Comparing your situation to others can be dangerous. Try to identify with the patterns of other problem gamblers, and realize that if we can't arrest

this problem now, we too can hit Rock Bottom just like those we have heard. In G.A., there is no scale on which Rock Bottom is measured. Everyone's Rock Bottom is different but the solution is the same - the G.A. Recovery Program and the Gamblers Anonymous Fellowship. The feeling of loss is something we all share no matter what brought us to G.A. We urge you to listen to the similarities not the differences.

***Will I ever be able to gamble again?***

This is a question commonly asked by new members to G.A. The G.A. program is a one-day-at-a-time program (sometimes one-hour-at-a-time). One day at a time, we say to ourselves: "Today, I will not gamble." And as one day rolls into the next and we begin to apply the principles of the G.A. Recovery Program, something extraordinary happens; we begin to change. We realize that our gambling is a symptom of a deeper problem. We find ourselves more easily able to detach from those life situations which in the past confounded us and sent us off into our self-destructive behaviors. Our behavior, too, begins to change as we learn other ways of approaching life. We notice that others are treating us with greater respect and affection. We are more at peace within ourselves. And as these things happen more regularly, we begin to realize that the desire to gamble slowly goes away. At some point, we look back and realize our lives have undergone a profound transformation, that we have tapped an inner resource, which we never knew existed. We then reflect on how it happened. First, we gave up trying to do it all ourselves and secondly we sought help, just as you have done. All this we receive freely from other compulsive gamblers in recovery in the fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous.

***And finally ...***

For many in the fellowship, our gambling began as amusement when we were young. But, in the end, what started as pleasure only produced a surplus of pain. Many of us were unaware that gambling could become an addiction. Today, more is known about addictions in general and pathological gambling in particular. However, gambling too has changed a lot over the years. Developments in information technology mean there are more varieties of gambling produced in greater quantities. Gambling is a 24/7 activity. If you are a compulsive gambler, you may Y.E.T. find the descent into the insanity of gambling and it may be more rapid and bewildering than you could imagine. But you're here, and because you're here, you're not gambling. If you identify, if you are one of us, the only prerequisites for recovery is an admission that you can't do it alone and that you be honest, open-minded, and willing to apply yourself to the G.A. program to the best of your ability.

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