

Steps Toward Acceptance

(adapted from Conquering Chemical Dependency pp. 27-28)

A strange fact is true about addiction. Even though we may have hated some parts of our addiction, we may have actually had a passionate love affair with our drug of choice. We thought about it, planned to be with it, savored it, and felt pain when separated from it. When we finally accept the fact that our drug of choice is not good for us, a grief process begins.

The grief is real and will decline in frequency and intensity over a period of time. The grief process includes the following five stages.

Denial

Most chemically addicted persons are unwilling to acknowledge—to themselves or others—their addiction. The addict and their loved ones will suffer as a result of it.

Bargaining

Bargaining is one of the first steps of coming out of denial and is merely an attempt to postpone quitting. Bargaining includes such comments as “I know I need to quit, but I hate to waste what I have left”, “I will quit when things are not so stressful”, “What’s one more valium?” or “God, please help me quit...tomorrow.”

Anger

When the facts are stacked up against us and we can no longer deny them or when we first enter treatment, we become angry. We tend to quickly blame others, including God, for our addiction and they become the victims of our misplaced anger.

Grief

Feelings of grief are a normal response to the loss of anything that we have considered to be important in our lives. Our drug of choice did things for us. It calmed our nerves, blocked painful emotions, and gave us a wall to hide behind. Although false, it gave us a sense of security, euphoria, courage, power, and control. It was what we used to cope with life. When our coping mechanism is taken away, we may feel as though we have lost a best friend. These feelings are normal. What we can do is to feel the grief, express the anger, and move forward, out of denial and into reality.

Acceptance

As we continue in recovery, we are able to accept and admit our addiction and our need for recovery. We come to realize we are powerless over our addiction and that only with the help of our Higher Power, Jesus Christ, can we get sober and stay sober. We did not get addicted overnight and we will not recover overnight. It is a process. It is not a quick fix as we once found in a pill or a bottle. It is far more satisfying and leads to serenity that is lasting. In reality, the stage of acceptance is where we begin our walk through the Christ centered 12 steps and 8 principles found in Celebrate Recovery. It is the process of stepping out of denial and into God’s grace!