



LIFE AFTER **ADDICTION**

JourneyPure 

>>CONTENTS

I. MOVING FORWARD

- > TIPS TO ACHIEVE A NEW START AFTER REHAB
- > MANAGING STRESS
- > MAINTAINING SUPPORT
- > SELF-ASSESSMENT & CHECKLIST

II. AMENDING RELATIONSHIPS

- > PLANTING NEW ROOTS
- > ESTABLISHING YOUR CORE BELIEFS
- > ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TECHNIQUES
- > SELF-ASSESSMENT & CHECKLIST

III. SEEKING GROWTH

- > CHANGING YOUR PERSPECTIVE
- > HOW TO SEEK GROWTH
- > WORKSHEET & DAILY MANTRAS

I. MOVING FORWARD

So, you've successfully made it through rehab and you're ready to start your new life. Although your therapists have prepared you for life outside the doors of rehab, you're scared of the days ahead. It's normal to have these feelings of uncertainty and hesitation—but don't let your fears conquer everything you've accomplished. With an active support system and a variety of coping mechanisms, you can be on the road to successful long-term sobriety.

>> ACHIEVING A NEW LIFE

Addiction recovery isn't accomplished by simply quitting use of drugs or alcohol—it is accomplished by building a new life away from these substances. It is important to fill your days with alternative routines that get you out of the mindset of "recovery." Why is it important to stop viewing your life as one in recovery? Because if you continue to focus on your past, it will be more difficult to adopt the new sober life you desire. It is critical to start viewing your life outside of rehab as fresh canvas and disconnect from past shortcomings.

If you are feeling overwhelmed by the thought of dealing with restructuring your days alone—it's okay. There are simple checkpoints you can follow to ensure your success for days and years to come.

Here are a few simple steps to follow to help you continue moving forward:

- 1) Find new hobbies

- 2) Avoid high-risk situations
- 3) Be honest with yourself & others
- 4) Learn to manage stress without substances
- 5) Seek additional supports when needed

>> FIND NEW HOBBIES

It is crucial to find new pastimes to engage in to replace occasions when you would use. A hobby is defined as *an activity or interest pursued for pleasure or relaxation and not as a main occupation*. Discovering new passions will help you uncover a deeper meaning for your life that holds real purpose. Boredom can be extremely dangerous and often cause relapse. Many people find new activities as a way to cope with stress and anxieties that would once trigger substance abuse.

Having trouble finding a new a new hobby? [Discover A Hobby](#) features a database of different activities and includes information on where to find lessons, online instructional videos & pictures, and the best beginners equipment, books, and videos. Explore the site and find something new that will spur your enthusiasm.

>> AVOID HIGH RISK SITUATIONS

Addiction is devious. That is why it is important to make a personal list of high-risk situations where you would feel inclined to use. At all costs, avoid putting yourself in these environments. To ensure your list includes the best information—you should go over it with someone in your support system because they can often spot something you may have missed.

Identifying personal high-risk scenarios can be difficult. However, particular times, places, people, or events often [initiate symptoms](#). Triggers can be highly individual, so it is impossible to compile a one-size-fits-all list. Instead, you should monitor your behaviors closely and learn how to identify situations where symptoms occurred and then identify what happened immediately before the onset of the

symptoms. Carry your list with you at all times because it could save your life and prevent relapse. Some common checkpoints [include](#):

- Avoid surrounding yourself with old friends who are users
- Avoid bars, clubs, and other tempting areas
- Be upfront about your drug history with medical professionals
- Use prescription drugs with caution

>> BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF & OTHERS

Addictions often necessitate lying. Did you get in the habit of lying to yourself and loved ones about your substance abuse problem? If so, lying has probably become second nature to you. In order to develop a new life, you must learn to be completely honest—with yourself and others. It is critical to identify your support system (i.e. doctors, family, friends, group therapies, etc.) and be open and truthful with them.

When you're honest, your addiction has nowhere to hide. Developing this trust will feel unnatural at first, but it will start to get easier overtime. This doesn't mean that you have to be vulnerable with everyone that you meet; however, it is essential to be honest with those close to you about your recovery.

Addiction protects and augments itself by means of a bodyguard of lies, distortions and evasions that taken together amount to a full scale assault upon consensual reality. Because addiction involves irrational and unhealthy thinking and behavior, its presence results in cognitive dissonance both within the addict himself and in the intersubjective realm of ongoing personal relationships.

[“Addiction, Lies and Relationships,”](#) Floyd P. Garret M.D.

>> LEARN TO MANAGE STRESS WITHOUT SUBSTANCES

Although triggers differ from person to person, stress is a factor that affects everyone. Substance abuse usually begins as a way to escape reality and alleviate tension. In order to successfully recover,

it is important to find ways to relax that aren't associated with drugs or alcohol. Why do people not relax? Most will say time is the issue. To overcome this false idea, add up the time you spent using substances: the time spent taking the drug, dealing with the consequences, and the time spent recovering—then you'll realize how critical it is to relax for a short period each day. You will make the time.

Looking for some natural ways to beat stress? [Body + Soul](#) provides some helpful options:

- Find circuit breakers—get your mind off the problem
- Exercise
- Avoid caffeine
- Eat small meals often
- Breathe or meditate
- Talk to yourself
- Tell someone who cares
- Aromatherapy
- Cocooning

If your issue is something that cannot be managed on your own, it is important to seek out the help of a professional.

>> SEEK ADDITIONAL SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED

Although you feel ready to move forward from rehab and acquire a life of your own outside the reigns of addiction—it is okay if you need extra help. If you start to feel overwhelmed by the process of moving forward, it is better to reach out than relapse. Tell those around you of your struggle and get the help you need. The journey to long-term sobriety can be a long and difficult one, but it's worth the effort.

Lean on those close to you and build a sober community around you. This will help with your success. Continue going to group meetings and sharing your honest thoughts and struggles. Sobriety is possible—keep moving forward and don't look back.

>>CHECKLIST

- ☐ I HAVE TRIED ENGAGING IN NEW ACTIVITIES SINCE LEAVING REHAB.

WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

**DATE YOU WILL
DO ACTIVITY AGAIN**

- ☐ I AM AVOIDING HIGH-RISK SITUATIONS.

HOW CAN YOU CONTINUE TO AVOID RISKY SITUATIONS?

- ☐ I AM BEING HONEST WITH MYSELF & OTHERS.

**IS THERE ANYTHING YOU ARE HAVING TROUBLE SHARING?
COMING TO TERMS WITH? HOW CAN YOU WORK ON SHARING THIS.**

>>CHECKLIST

☐ I HAVE FOUND NATURAL WAYS TO RELIEVE STRESS.

WHAT CAUSES STRESS IN MY LIFE & HOW CAN I AVOID IT?

☐ I AM WILLING TO SEEK ADDITIONAL SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED.

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO ACKNOWLEDGE WHEN YOU NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT? WRITE DOWN YOUR PLAN OF ACTION.

II. AMENDING RELATIONSHIPS

The entire process of moving forward after dealing with the struggles of addiction is a long undertaking, but it is critical to obtain the new life that you deserve. Your journey after rehab will be a difficult adjustment; however, it will reap the rewards of personal growth along with restored & meaningful relationships. Don't hold back—celebrate your accomplishments and start moving forward.

Once you have achieved adjusting to your new personal norms following rehab, it is time to start amending relationships. You're a new person now, but your inner circle of loved ones has still yet to experience you after rehab. Those who have witnessed your addiction have gone through the constant ups and downs alongside you—and a simple apology is not enough. Amending your relationships after rehab will take time and effort. A new foundation must be built to move forward, but it will be worth it in the end.

>> CREATING NEW ROOTS

In order to amend your pre-existing relationships, it is important to start building a fresh foundation—but it must start with new roots. How do you plant these roots? *Honesty*. You have successfully created change from within by being honest with yourself, but now it is time to bring that change into your relationships. Relationships are not restored by fixing all of your past wrongs—it involves starting with a fresh canvas. Why? Because you're not the same person you were under the hold of addiction.

Here are a few things to remember while you are amending your relationships:

- 1) Acknowledge your positives
- 2) Take it one day at a time
- 3) Address your core beliefs
- 4) Additional support may be needed

>> ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR POSITIVES

Addiction is a systematic disease—a system that you had to rework in order to achieve sobriety. What does this mean exactly? While you were under the power of your addiction, all aspects of your life were affected. This includes yourself, your encompassing environments, and all those who surrounded you. Although you are continuing to work on your personal growth—you must also acknowledge the new changes happening to your existing environments and relationships.

Don't be mistaken, this does not mean reintroducing negative people and/or environments back into your life. It is critical to avoid any triggers that could interfere with your long-term sobriety. However, in order to build a new-formed community outside the doors of rehab—you must acknowledge the positive environments and relationships that you want to recover. Once you have identified the individuals that you wish to rebuild relationships with and safe environments you can grow in—you can continue moving forward with the amending process.

>> TAKE IT ONE DAY AT A TIME

Building a new-formed trust with loved ones will not happen overnight—so it is important to not expect it. Although you have successfully completed rehab and you know you've changed, it will take time for those close to you to adapt to these changes. It is critical to not view trust as an all-or-nothing thing while reworking your connections with others. Those around you will be scared to blindly commit to your new promises, but be patient. Develop trust one day at a time. Everyday you are committing to sobriety—do the

same with the integrity in your relationships & those around you will notice.

“Maybe love is not always about trying to fix something that is broken. Maybe it’s about starting over and creating something better.” –Unknown

>> ADDRESS YOUR CORE BELIEFS

While constructing your new relationships it is important to express your new core values and beliefs. The developments that you made during rehab should be shared with those close with you. Trust the process—recovery doesn’t happen overnight & neither does trust. However, there are ways to provide insight to your loved ones to encourage relationship growth. Sharing your core values will help them gain a more transparent understanding of the personal changes you’ve made in your life, which will further help you establish a new foundation.

“It’s not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are.” –Roy Disney

Identifying your core values during rehab ultimately helps you navigate through your new life of sobriety. Sharing these values will help your loved ones better understand you, and offer you the needed support to continue your journey. This will serve as a huge building block while rooting your new relationships. Once again, be patient and take everything one day at a time, the growth will happen organically.

>> ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MAY BE NEEDED

Although there are many steps that you can take to amend the relationships with your loved ones—sometimes professional help is necessary. As stated earlier, addiction is a systematic disease—thus, your loved ones were amongst those affected by your struggle. It can be difficult for certain people to adapt, understand, and trust

your new life. Seeking outside support to help your loved ones cope & grow can be extremely beneficial to move forward. Just like individual therapy being a necessity for your personal development, family/friendship therapy can be beneficial for rebuilding connections with those you love.

Once you have worked to build a new trusting foundation away from the reigns of addiction—you will have a loving support system to help you maintain sobriety. We all need a strong community around us, and it is something you deserve. Be patient and don't give up—continue your journey moving forward.

>>CHECKLIST

- ☐ I AM WORKING TO ACKNOWLEDGE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF MY LIFE ON A DAILY BASIS.

WHAT ARE FIVE POSITIVES IN YOUR LIFE??

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- ☐ I AM ADAPTING TO MY NEW LIFE ONE DAY AT A TIME.

- ☐ I HAVE ESTABLISHED MY CORE BELIEFS.

WHAT ARE THEY?

- ☐ I AM CONTINUOUSLY SEEKING SUPPORT.

WHO IS YOUR PRIMARY SUPPORT SYSTEM?

III. SEEKING GROWTH

Life in recovery is an ongoing process and leaving your old lifestyle behind can be exceedingly difficult. Even though you have successfully made it through rehabilitation, this is just one of the first steps in the recovery process. We have covered some methods of moving forward and amending relationships after addiction—but what's next? You are well aware of the challenges of addiction, and recovery is a challenge of its own. Despite everything you have overcome, there is still the opportunity to use your substance abuse recovery as an occasion to seek personal growth. The self-growth portion of your recovery never has to end, but what does it look like? We are going to uncover some ways that you can successfully cultivate a new life and thrive in your sobriety for years to come.

>> CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

What does personal growth during recovery look like? A Washington University study published in the [Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment](#) asked this same question to residential treatment center focus groups to gain more insight. 65 individuals in recovery revealed how they personally changed for the better after their struggles with substance abuse. The group was able to universally agree what growth looked like for them, it included: deepening ties with close family and friends; coming to the understanding they are not alone; developing more empathy and compassion for others; learning what really mattered in life; and knowing there is nothing they can't handle.

How were these 65 individuals able to reach these conclusions? They mentioned these personal approaches:

"I try to appreciate—and not trying to sound romantic about it—but I appreciate when there is nice weather now, a lot more than I used to. And I just appreciate a lot more of that. I mean, when I think back on all the stuff I've gone through, I appreciate the fact that I'm just alive. It is not just feeling good physically, it is a matter of there is a lot of little things that I just appreciate."

"I am grateful for everything that has happened in my life that brought me here, and that's from my heart."

"Before, my family could not talk about anything, and this kind of forced them to come together because of my crisis."

"I'm blessed that I've got a good-paying job, and if I see somebody and truly feel that they need a couple of bucks, I'll give it to them without them asking."

>> HOW TO SEEK GROWTH

Although substance abuse is an ugly disease—many people are better now than they were before. Psychologists call this process *posttraumatic growth*. [The UNC Charlotte Posttraumatic Growth Research Group](#) defines it as a “positive change experienced as a result of the struggle with a major life crisis or a traumatic event.” This growth can be experienced in 5 ways:

1. **Opportunity.** Sometimes major life crises can open new doors for opportunity. Life struggles can help individuals experience personal development and drive, which can cause the emergence of possibilities that were not present before. Strive to look for new areas of opportunity that your recovery may have led you to. Your future is in your hands now and out of the reigns of addiction.

2. **Relationships.** After rehabilitation many individuals will strengthen pre-existing bonds with loved ones. While becoming closer with those in their inner circles, many people will also experience an increased feeling of connection with others who are suffering with addiction disorders. This increased empathy and understanding, usually obtained from group therapies, allows those in recovery to build new relationships that are long lasting. Work to build and sustain meaningful relationships—this will not only help maintain sobriety, but help you appreciate those around you.
3. **Personal Strength.** Many people in recovery begin to develop a sense of their own strength. They adopt a, “if I lived through that, I can face anything” mentality. This improved strength helps individuals adopt a reinvigorated life. Be proud of what you have overcome and acknowledge your inner strength. Give yourself credit and allow yourself to find personal happiness in your new life.
4. **Appreciation.** Living through an addiction makes many individuals feel grateful to be alive. Recovery is not easy, and acknowledging small things to appreciate throughout the day will help you seek long-term personal growth. What are you thankful for? What makes you happy? Answer these questions on a regular basis and be grateful.
5. **Spirituality.** Many individuals will experience a type of “spiritual awakening” while in recovery. This can involve a significant change in their belief systems or simply a deepening of their spiritual lives. If you experienced spiritual growth during recovery, continue to find ways to stay rooted. Find others you can grow with spiritually, and pinpoint the ways you personally stay connected.

It is important to go into your new life in recovery strong. You have been through a lot—and now it your time to thrive. Move forward, amend relationships, and seek the growth you deserve. Recovery is life-long, but you can use that to your advantage. Your journey is just beginning—start now & keep flourishing.

>>WORKSHEET

HOW HAVE YOUR PERSPECTIVES CHANGED SINCE REHAB?
(DESCRIBE IN A SENTENCE)

ABOUT LIFE?

BEFORE: _____

AFTER: _____

ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS?

BEFORE: _____

AFTER: _____

ABOUT YOURSELF?

BEFORE: _____

AFTER: _____

>>WORKSHEET

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES HAVE OPENED UP FOR YOU AFTER REHAB?

WHO HAVE YOU BUILT MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH IN RECOVERY?
(SAY THANK YOU!)

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

LIST 10 THINGS / PEOPLE YOU APPRECIATE.

1. <hr/>	2. <hr/>
3. <hr/>	4. <hr/>
5. <hr/>	6. <hr/>
7. <hr/>	8. <hr/>
9. <hr/>	10. <hr/>

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP 6 PERSONAL STRENGTHS?

1. <hr/>	2. <hr/>
3. <hr/>	4. <hr/>
5. <hr/>	6. <hr/>

>>WORKSHEET

WHAT IMPACT WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEAVE IN THIS LIFE?

WHY? _____

USE THE ABOVE ANSWERS TO CONSTRUCT A PERSONAL
MISSION STATEMENTS

YOU FINISHED! ALWAYS TAKE TIME TO REFLECT ON YOUR
ANSWERS IN THIS BOOK & REMEMBER WHY YOU
MADE THE DECISION TO GET SOBER.
KEEP MOVING FORWARD, EVERYDAY.



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