

Chapter 11 My Relapse Prevention Plan

At any fork in the road, one branch leads toward a stronger sobriety, and the other leads ultimately toward relapse. Most of the exercises in this workbook have tried to shed light on the many varieties and flavors of this basic choice. If you have the luxury of always doing an exhaustive Sobriety Priority T-chart analysis before every decision in your life, and if you have uncommonly sharp foresight, you may never need to put together a relapse prevention plan. Similarly, you may never need a smoke detector or a fire extinguisher.

However, in real life people sometimes make decisions first and do the analysis afterward. Situations also come up where people seem to be going in a circle and cannot see a fork in the road that would lead to new ground. At times like these, it's useful to be able to recognize a relapse-bound path or a near-relapse situation. You may then be able to make timely corrections and avoid the crash, or at least minimize the impact and limit the damage.

If a relapse does happen, it can be a valuable educational experience for all involved. One utility of a support group is to serve as a living laboratory where people try different action plans and share the results with one another. A relapse that happens in isolation is a terrible waste. This chapter includes exercises that the person who has relapsed could work by way of getting a deeper understanding and sharing the lessons of the experience.

1 How and Why I Stopped

Sometimes a near-relapse situation arises because the person never understood or has forgotten why they stopped drinking/using to begin with, or because the situation has changed so that those reasons no longer obtain.

- ___ One day it just came to me out of the blue that I had to stop and I did
- ___ One day something dramatic happened and I stopped
- ___ I had been sick and tired of drinking/using and thinking about stopping for _____ (time)